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Cultural Citizenship and its Implications for Citizenship Education: Chinese University Students' Civic Experience in relation to Mass Media and the University Citizenship Curriculum

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Abstract

A growing body of research has argued that university citizenship curricula are inefficient in promoting civic participation, while there is a tendency towards a broader citizenship understanding and new forms of civic engagements and citizenship learning in everyday life. The notion of cultural citizenship in this thesis concentrates on media practices' relation to civic expression and civic engagement. This research thus argues that not enough attention has been paid to the effects of citizenship education policy on students and students' active citizenship learning in China. This thesis examines the civic experience of university students in China in the parallel contexts of widespread adoption of mass media and of university citizenship education courses, which have been explicitly mandatory for promoting civic morality education in Chinese universities since 2007. This research project raises significant questions about the mediating influences of these two contexts on students' perceptions of civic knowledge and civic participation, with particular interest to examine whether and how the notion of cultural citizenship could be applied in the Chinese context and whether it could provide certain implications for citizenship education in China. University students in one university in Beijing contributed to this research by providing both quantitative and qualitative data collected from mixed-methods research. 212 participants contributed to the questionnaire data collection and 12 students took part in interviews.

Guided by the theoretical framework of cultural citizenship, a central focus of this study is to explore whether new forms of civic engagement and civic learning and a new direction of citizenship understanding can be identified among university students' mass media use. The study examines the patterns of students' mass media use and its relationship to civic participation, and also explores the ways in which mass media shape students and how they interact and perform through the media use. In addition, this study discusses questions about how national context, citizenship tradition and civic education curricula relate to students' civic perceptions, civic participation and civic motivation in their enactment of cultural citizenship. It thus tries to provide insights and identify problems associated with

citizenship courses in Chinese universities.

The research finds that Chinese university students can also identify civic issues and engage in civic participation through the influence of mass media, thus indicating the application of cultural citizenship in the wider higher education arena in China. In particular, the findings demonstrate that students' citizenship knowledge has been influenced by their entertainment experiences with TV programs, social networks and movies. However, the study argues that the full enactment of cultural citizenship in China is conditional with regards to characteristics related to two prerequisites: the quality of participation and the influence of the public sphere in the Chinese context. Most students in the study are found to be inactive civic participants in their everyday lives, especially in political participation. Students express their willingness to take part in civic activities, but they feel constrained by both the current citizenship education curriculum in universities and the strict national policy framework. They mainly choose to accept ideological and political education for the sake of personal development rather than to actively resist it, however, they employ creative ways online to express civic opinions and conduct civic discussion. This can be conceptualised as the cultural dimension of citizenship observed from students who are not passively prescribed by traditional citizenship but who have opportunities to build their own civic understanding in everyday life. These findings lead to the conclusion that the notion of cultural citizenship not only provides a new mode of civic learning for Chinese students but also offers a new direction for configuring citizenship in China.

This study enriches the existing global literature on cultural citizenship by providing contemporary evidence from China which is a developing democratic country, as well as offering useful information for Chinese university practitioners, policy makers and citizenship researchers on possible directions for citizenship understanding and citizenship education. In particular, it indicates that it is important for efforts to be made to generate a culture of authentic civic participation for students in the university as well as to promote the development of the public sphere in the community and the country generally.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

Print name:

Definitions/abbreviations

Chenmin: subjects of the feudal rule

Fa yan quan: the right to speak

Liangke: two classes/courses

Shimin: people in urban cities

Xuehui: teaching organizations

Zhi qing quan: the right to know

BBS Bulletin Board System

CCPCC Chinese Communist Party Central Committee

CNNIC China Internet Network Information Centre

CPC the Chinese Communist Party

CSOs Civil Society Organizations

CYLC Communist Youth League of China

ICT Information and Communication Technology

ICL Indented Civic Learning outcomes

NGOs Non-governmental organisations

NPCC the National People's Congress of China

PRC the People's Republic of China

PLS Plain Language Statement

SES Socio-Economic Status

Chapter One: Introduction and Rationale

1.1 An overview of this research

Citizenship and citizenship education has become a booming research area in China since the 1978 Reforms and Open Policies.¹ The Chinese government, educational authorities and citizenship researchers are working on relevant educational reforms, citizenship theories, citizenship education contents as well as teaching methods with the aims to deliver practical citizenship education, promote civic consciousness and increase civic participation among young people (Zhu & Feng, 2006). Youth and early adulthood are critical transition periods, as civic and political participation at this stage could stimulate a long-term engagement (Jennings & Stoker, 2004; Rome et al., 2009). Students who attend universities usually at 18 years old in China are legally entitled to have full citizenship rights and to possess more autonomy to practice civic behaviours than those students in primary and secondary schools (Zhao, 2010), thus it could be expected that research on Chinese university students would produce more valuable resources for citizenship education in China.

However, it is argued by some that research on Chinese university students' civic education remains theoretically underdeveloped and empirically understudied. Tu (2011) mentioned that a serious gap exists between China's citizenship education policies and actual practice in Chinese higher education institutions. Similarly, in the thesis "Research on Chinese University Students' Citizenship Education in the Context of Globalization", Xu (2013) pointed out its current theoretical and empirical problems especially in the era of globalization. There is a general consensus that although scholars have paid attention to understanding student' perceptions of citizenship, little is known about the school lives of students (Kennedy et al., 2008, Zhao, 2010).

¹ The article "Fundamental Education Should be First Citizenship Education" written by Chen (1987) and published in the Journal "*Education Research*" in 1987 is the earliest work that can be found that proposes citizenship education in China.

Considering the fact that this area of evaluating citizenship education from students' perspectives is always lacking in current Chinese citizenship research, this study is motivated by the intention to reveal how contemporary Chinese university students perceive civic issues and civic learning, as well as how they participate in civic activities in the wider context of their daily lives. Further, based on the western theory of cultural citizenship, which is primarily viewed as controversial and indeed impossible in its application in the Chinese context, this thesis engages with the advancement of citizenship theory for understanding university students' perceptions and experience of civic participation especially as it is influenced by the mass media.

This chapter provides an introduction to the following research thesis. After presenting the research background from historical and empirical perspectives, I establish my own research position which is developed within the framework of cosmopolitan and citizenship theories. I then introduce the research rationale related to the wider literature, research questions as well as the research methodology chosen to achieve my research purpose. A list of the main findings is also provided. Finally, the last section of this chapter provides an introduction to the thesis structure and the contents of each chapter.

1.2 The background to this research

1.2.1 Historical background

In 2007, the 17th National People's Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) officially announced its national task of "strengthening citizen consciousness education and establishing ideas of democracy, a rule of law, freedom, equality as well as justice" (CCP News Website, 2007). This was the first time that the Chinese government had clearly voiced the intention to enhance young people's citizen consciousness through education in its pursuit of developing a modern society.

To implement this call, the government employed the established compulsory subject of ideological and political education in universities as a central platform to deliver

citizenship education among university students.² The subject covers a wide range of topics that include not only political, ideological and moral issues, but also the values related to citizenship and education and their effects on current events (Li et al., 1990). To be specific, Chinese citizenship education is mainly expected to be delivered in courses with titles such as “Marxist Theory”, “Fundamentals of Law” and “Ideological and Moral Cultivation” under the framework of ideological and political education. The particular course “Situation and Policy” was added later into this university curriculum with the intention of better preparing university graduates for future careers and life in society (Xiao & Tong, 2010). Later, in 2012, the 18th National People’s Congress of CPC further proposed the project of cultivating citizen morality in order to cultivate a renewed social context, and thus promotes the values of loyalty to lawful duties, social responsibility and family responsibility which were to be emphasized in Chinese citizenship consciousness education (Wenming websites, 2013).

China is not an exception in using a formal curriculum as a tool for citizenship education, however unlike western citizenship discourses, the main purpose of ideological and political education is publicly declared to be the indoctrination of Chinese youth with a certain national ideology (Chu, 1977, Cited from Tu [2011]). To be specific, it is stated that patriotism, collectivism and socialism are among the foremost and fundamental values to be boosted through this curriculum, which is underpinned by the Guidelines for the Implementation of Civic and Moral Construction (Chinese Communist Party Central Committee [CCPCC] and the State Council, 2001). Consistent with these policy guidelines, Chinese scholars generally acknowledge that citizenship education in practice consists of education for patriotism, political indoctrination, moral development, democratic and legal knowledge, all of which aim to develop students as a particular subject of the State (Cao, 2011; Fu & Chen, 2006; Wang, 1999; Zang, 2004; Zhang & Xu, 2010).

² Articles generally conduct citizenship research based on the framework of ideological and political education in China such as: “School Education and Civic Consciousness Cultivation” by Li (1997), “Citizenship Education and Civic Consciousness Cultivation—Analysing the Implementation of Citizenship Education in School Moral Education” by Ye (2008), “Civic Consciousness Cultivation----the Breakthrough of Ideological and Political Education among University Students” by Zhao (2011).

In the context explained above, it is understandable that some Chinese scholars have questioned the adequacy of current ideological and political education for particular civic purposes among university students. They have proposed relevant educational reforms within ideological and political education that include: the introduction of civic activities (Ye, 2005); students' participation mechanisms (Hu, 2005); an emphasis on civic values (Hu, 2005); and the establishment of connections between schools, family and society in citizenship teaching (Chen, 2009). In addition, some other researchers further argued that social values should not be confined within the present government-led static and unitary moral system but rather an independent course of citizenship education, incorporating and recognizing plural value systems and civic values, is needed (Xia & Tang, 2006). However, those arguments received little attention from the Chinese government and remained on the theoretical level.

Later at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, a noticeable fact, which cannot be ignored, is that the mass media has already become closely connected with young people's daily lives in China. We can say that we have entered into an era of media and information. For instance, the 2012 report on internet development in China revealed that by 2012 the scale of citizens' network connection has reached a half billion after an increase of 558 million (China Internet Network Information Centre [CNNIC], 2013). Among them, young people account for the greater part of that increased amount (CNNIC, 2013). In particular, the rapid development of social networks has attracted millions of young people all over the world (Kear, 2011; Livingstone & Brake, 2010). Although sites such as Facebook and Twitter are popular in western countries, they are not available in Chinese society. Rather, micro blogging sites, especially Sina micro blogging (Sina Weibo in Chinese)³ turn out to be increasingly popular with Chinese university students.

A number of studies have explored whether and how mass media, especially new mass media, can contribute to civic participation and civic learning. For example, it is reported that young people's intensity of social network use is related to increased civic

³ Sina Weibo is one of the biggest non-official Chinese micro blogging services, which started in 2009.

participation (Burgess et al., 2006; Zhang et al., 2010). Relevant literature has also provided rich accounts of its implications for online activism in China, at least at the theoretical level (Yang, 2009; Wang et al., 2008). For instance, Qiu (2009) pointed out that most active internet users are encouraged to gather and discuss civil and political issues by this new media technology. It is suggested that the development of the Internet in China would bring “the inexorability of the political opening-alternative sources of information, communication channels beyond government control” (Hartford, 2000, p.255).

These enquiries about the possible link between internet use and citizenship education are again raising questions about political education for the government. In the former relatively closed learning context of citizenship education, citizenship values and moralities could be taught within a nation-wide uniform curriculum by cramming education methods (Yang, 2002). However, young people’s conceptions of citizenship taught in schools by official textbooks to some extent are being challenged under the wave of popular culture and mass media, as their values and consciousness also tend to be reconstructed by mass media (Liang, 2011). Compared with the political demands in this national curriculum, students appear to be provided with more opportunities to choose from a wider range of identities as well as to create their own self-identity under the wave of globalization (Arnett, 2002). Therefore, it would be worthwhile to investigate the effectiveness or deficiencies of current citizenship education in China from the perspectives of university students. In addition, it is very important to understand university students’ perceptions of civic knowledge and civic participation beyond educational settings, especially in relation to their mass media experience. However, few systematic studies have been conducted in this particular research area. Thus, this thesis attempts to respond to this historical call and tries to focus on university students’ responses towards their civic experiences both in and beyond university citizenship education.

1.2.2 Theoretical background

Facing the needs to understand university students’ civic experience in the wider context, it

is notable that relevant citizenship theories are lacking in the Chinese context. On the one hand, current dominant citizenship policies are mostly based on the Chinese traditional understanding of citizenship (Xu, 2013). To be specific, the emphasis lies in educating students to be a certain type of person for the demands of Chinese socialism and its main contents simply contain political education and ideological education. On the other hand, Chinese scholars have long emphasized the supreme status of ideological and political education in university students' civic learning, while seldom paying much attention to civic learning from wider contexts, and certainly not to the influence of mass media from students' perspectives. In fact, mass media's perceived negative influence in, for example, consumerism, information explosion, information monopoly and political deception, is always emphasized through a simplistic dystopian framework that predicts an erosion of collectivism and socialism (Huang & Chen, 2001; Liu, 2003; Li, 2004; Wang, 2006; Kong, 2008). Therefore, there is the potential for further research to go beyond the constrained framework and embrace contemporary citizenship theories from global contexts.

In western contexts, the wave of globalization has posed severe challenges to traditional notions and forms of citizenship, as it is seen as a threat to the significance of traditional borders, as well as to the role of the nation-state, national governance, and national citizenship (Myers, 2010; O'Brien, 1992; Ohmae, 1995). Scholars have since argued for new understandings of citizenship that are embedded in individuals' daily lives and which could reach beyond the traditional citizenship model. Similarly, Giddens (1994) has also pointed out the importance of observing young people's views on citizenship carefully,

...because an individual's judgment of a polity cannot be taken for granted, as their perception no longer relies on what is inherited and prescribed, but needs to be actively discovered, created and sustained (Giddens, 1994, p.82).

Under this context, the theory of cultural citizenship seems particularly valuable by providing a new direction for understanding citizenship issues and citizenship education. It is defined in relation to an active process of everyday citizenship (Dickinson et al., 2008) and DIY citizenship (Hartley, 1999). Besides that, the theory of cultural citizenship

associated with Toby Miller (1998) and Joke Hermes (2014) further addresses the issue of mass media's civic implications and especially challenges us to rethink the relationship between citizenship and entertainment media consumption.

Scholars in western contexts have long treated mass media as an essential part of political life, but it originally included only the domains of serious media such as radio, television news and print news in its discussion of civic implications (Hart, 1999; Postman, 1986; Putnam, 2000). However, in recent years the cultural citizenship perspective has argued about the great potential for people to make sense of civic issues through their use of mass media and, in particular, of entertainment media (Coleman, 2006, 2007; Cunningham 2001; Dahlgren, 2006; Hermes, 2001, 2006; Jacobs, 2007; Jones, 2006; Miller 1998, 2007; Stevenson 2003). For instance, Dahlgren (2006) argues that the modern media era has blurred the boundary of politics and entertainment, and various forms of popular culture are now playing important role for democracy. The basic idea is that ordinary citizens could develop their discussion over identity construction, civic values and common concerns in their daily lives through their interaction with mass media. In particular, the Internet with its open access and various channels could serve ultimately as a force for democratization (MacKinnon, 2008). Relevant research of cultural citizenship has been conducted within academic areas and also empirically in developed democracies, which demonstrates the application of this theory among citizens (See Chapter Two).

Similarly, the theory of cultural citizenship is thought to be valuable for Chinese citizenship research. On the one hand, it poses serious challenges to the traditional citizenship understanding that is rigidly related to the Party in China, and on the other hand, it tends to question the dominant status of formal curricula in students' civic learning in Chinese universities. This justifies the need to explore citizens' civic practices as influenced by the mass media. It is within these considerations that I situate this research project, as theories of cultural citizenship may be useful to provide a theoretical understanding of how the mass media works in university students' civic experience.

1.3 My personal standing point

I further situated my thesis within five contexts that make up my personal standing point with regards to cultural citizenship and education in China. First, the existing discussion of cultural citizenship that is reviewed in Chapter Two below is primarily based within cultural studies research, which mainly focuses on internet media audiences talking about their specific media experiences, and most often deals with their media literacy ability through anthropological qualitative research methods. In this regard, the cultural citizenship perspective examines diverse rhetorical styles and discourses on mass media, which potentially shapes people's civic values and stances on social issues (Hermes, 2014). However, this thesis would not go that far, as an examination of abundant information and diverse topics through mass media discourses is beyond the scope of my Ph.D. research aims. Rather, I aim to connect this theory with educational domains and used a mixed-methods research format consisting of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to particularly examine how university students consume media content, whether new mass media has created opportunities for students to express ideas and participate in civic activities for educational purposes. By doing so, it has been easier to spot generally whether the theory of cultural citizenship could be applied and observed among university students in the Chinese context.

Second, this research aims to extend the discussion of cultural citizenship in western democracies to non-western systems in China. As discussed above, the traditional citizenship understanding embodied in the citizenship curriculum in China is facing challenges from globalization and the development of mass media. I aimed to review and explore new citizenship theories and practices of citizenship education in different contexts. As a result, the theory of cultural citizenship appeared to be a potential theory to guide citizenship research in China, where formal civic participation is less developed in people's civic life. Taking this approach allowed me as a researcher to move beyond traditional approaches in China and to use my personal cosmopolitan position to conduct the research.

Third, when exploring theories and practices of citizenship and citizenship education in different countries under the wave of globalization, the national context should always be taken into consideration, as responses to globalization in each context is a product of its specific economic, political and cultural factors (Leon, 2001). Yu (2004) also argues that citizenship education cannot be developed if separated from its historical cultural root. Citizenship education is thus largely constructed within boundaries of different nations (Kenny & Fairbrother, 2004), and the existence of differences in citizenship education in different countries can be justified and should be understood. For instance, multicultural citizenship is advocated in America, a country known as a melting pot of different cultures (Boukari & Goura, 2012). In addition, the report *Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools* released by the Centre for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement in 2011 underwrote that promoting students' active participation in community services and voluntary activities became a core part of citizenship education in America after the events of 9/11. When looking at examples of Asian countries, things are different. Citizenship education in Singapore has adopted some western practices but is more influenced by the Confucian School and tends to promote political participation and law enforcement on the basis of Confucianism, which makes it a successful example of combining eastern and western traditional culture.⁴ As this research is conducted in the Chinese context, I argue that the focus of my exploration of possible citizenship theories should be situated in the Chinese context, and cater for the needs of Chinese university students.

Fourth, when exploring the theory of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context, I was curious to know what results could be achieved if university students are offered a chance to express their civic experiences and civic needs in their daily lives. I have to make it clear that the primary aim of this research is not to comment on or criticize the current political system in China, but is an exploration to understand students' needs of their citizenship

⁴ It is reflected from the Five Shared Values proposed by the government on 15 January 1991 to forge a national identity in the face of a changing society with evolving values. They are: Nation before community and society above self; Family as the basic unit of society; Community support and respect for the individual; Consensus not conflict; and Racial and religious harmony. Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_542_2004-12-18.html. Accessed 13 July 2015.

learning in changing social realities. In this sense, the principle of inquiring into a subject on the basis of its intrinsic interests has been recognized throughout the thesis (Hammersley, 2004). My concept of education, therefore, appears to be in consistent with the thinking that the aims of education are to help prepare students to live better individual lives and also to contribute to the advancement of wider society (Davies et al., 2002).

Last but not least, this research area is of a politically sensitive nature in China, a country governed as a Party-state. The “right to know” (zhi qing quan) important or sometimes sensitive information about political processes is severely underdeveloped, and also there has been no free and safe channel to exercise the “right to speak” (fa yan quan) in Chinese communist history (Yu, 2006). This is especially the case among Chinese youth. Chapter Three below indicates the detrimental effect of these factors to the civic health and the development of the public sphere in China. However, the on-going political process of decentralization in China after the 1978 Reforms and Open Policies tend to gradually recognize the importance of the development of civil society and civic participation, which then calls for further citizenship research in China. In addition, although the Party-state has not substantially changed, active use of mass media has gradually become a way for Chinese young people to share civic understanding and to exercise citizenship beyond formal political channels (Yu, 2006). This suggests that more attention can be and should be given to the civic significance of the influence of mass media in the Chinese context, and this is another main research incentive in this study.

1.4 Rationale: positioning the thesis in wider literature

This study examines various related theories to provide a conceptual framework for analysing the potential of mass media to influence university students’ civic perceptions and civic participation, with the overall intention to explore the awareness of cultural understanding of citizenship and citizenship education among university students. The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.1 with this regard includes approaches from mass media research, theories on elements of civic perceptions and civic participation, which are elaborated in the literature review to be presented in Chapter Two.

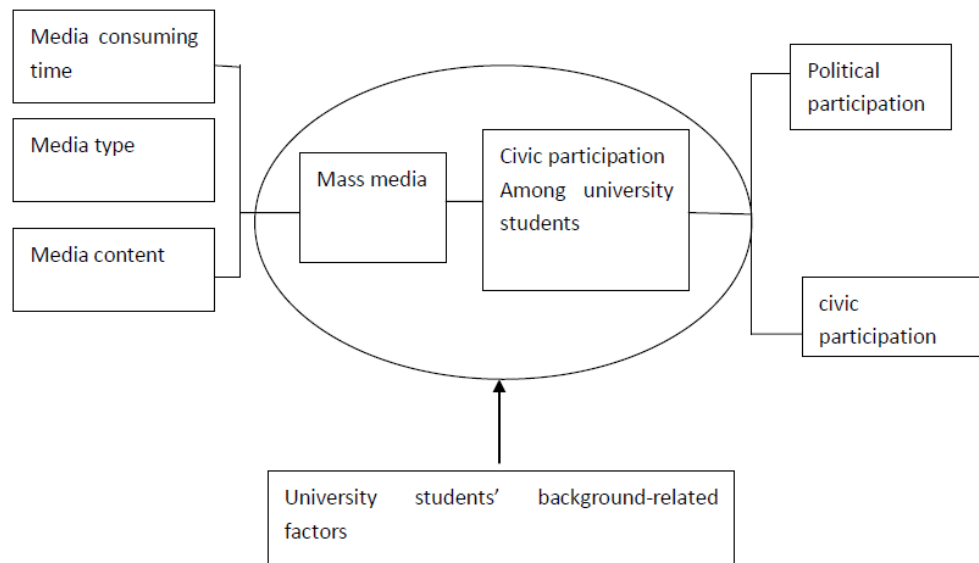


Figure1.1: The conceptual framework of mass media, civic participation and individual background

When positioning this thesis in the literature, there are two dominant and related preconditions detected in discussions of the theory of cultural citizenship: the possibility of active participation and the existence of the public sphere. This approach further takes into consideration social, political and cultural conditions which are important for the formulation of cultural citizenship in any particular context. Students' civic perceptions, civic participation and civic motivation are influenced by the existing national context, the prevalent citizenship tradition and the adopted civic education curricula. In this regard, the supporting theories and conceptual framework also include approaches from political science, sociology and cultural studies; theories of higher education; theories of citizenship education and the civic role of the university. These are elaborated in the literature review from a Western perspective in Chapter Two, from the Chinese perspective in Chapter Three and the conceptual framework is again presented in more detail in Chapter Four.

In the next section, I present a brief introduction of the literature on these two preconditions for cultural citizenship in the western context. Later in the thesis, in Chapter Three, these two preconditions are examined in relation to the Chinese context to determine if there is any correlation to the enactment of cultural citizenship in the western context.

1.4.1 The precondition of “participation”

The first precondition relates to the quality of participation in a certain context. A culture of participation can be nurtured through mass media as well as through traditional forms of social communication and can become the site for developing and exercising citizenship roles (Burgess, 2006). Particularly, new mass media providing people with sites of participatory content creations shows the democratic potential for developing citizens (Burgess, 2006). In this regard, the need for exploring current levels of youth civic participation when discussing the theory of cultural citizenship is justified.

Bennett (2008) identifies two contrasting narratives on youth civic participation, and summarizes them as the “relatively passive and disengaged youth paradigm” and the “reasonably active and engaged youth paradigm”. The first portrays young people as civically disengaged individuals, based on certain research findings that indicate a decline in conventional forms of political participation as well as different forms of civic engagement in general among the youth (Bauman, 2007; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Forbrig, 2005; IDEA, 2006; Macedo, 2005; Park, 2000). Accordingly, the young are increasingly indifferent to public affairs, and seem reluctant to know about civic issues (Galston, 2001). On the contrary, the second paradigm argues that the narrative of political disengagement actually ignores certain positive trends in youth civic engagements, such as a steep rise in volunteering activities (Levine, 2006, p.15). Rather it tends to emphasize the growing importance of online communities and peer networks (Bennett, 2008). In addition, a transformation in how the young get involved in civic actions should be recognized (Bang, 2005; Li & Marsh, 2008; Quintelier, 2007).

Declining civic participation has become a crucial problem in many western established democracies in the 21st century (Dalton, 2004; Livingstone & Markham, 2008). In particular, young people’s decreasing formal participation, for example, as evidenced in low election turnouts, has caused particular alarm (Milner, 2010; Park, 2004; Wattenberg, 2011; Wilkinson & Mulgan 1995). Responding to this observation, there is growing

research interest in citizenship and citizenship education on the agendas of governments and educational agencies (Dudley & Gitelson, 2002; Galston, 2007), with the aim of providing sufficient support and opportunities for students' active civic participation.

A recent international survey of civic and citizenship education covering 38 countries (Schulz et al., 2010) found that the majority of participant countries provided a specific civic education course that was compulsory in general education. For instance, compulsory citizenship education was implemented in September 2002 in England. In Scotland, the curriculum aims to provide the context for developing active global citizens. Similarly, Llewellyn and colleagues detailed the emphasis on active citizenship in Canada (2007). In essence, current educational programs tend to emphasize community service, formal participation through representation, involvement in civic organizations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), volunteering, and political consumerism, rather than on envisaging different forms of radical participation such as activist occupation or engaging in street protest (Cox et al., 2005).

Considering these factors, the theory of cultural citizenship provides a rationale to investigate the participatory culture in the Chinese context. In particular, discussion about the potential of schools for promoting civic participation and how university students are encouraged to participate in civic activities by the citizenship curriculum is relevant in this study.

1.4.2 The precondition of the public sphere

The discussion of cultural citizenship is also related to theories of the public sphere. The Habermasian political public sphere first serves as an ideal site for participatory citizenship, as citizens can freely express their attitudes, desires and needs (Yudice, 2003, p.76). Among the main standards that Habermas has configured in his ideal type of public sphere there is consideration of whether discussion is free and open to all, whether it is rational, and whether it is reciprocal (Habermas, 1989).

Later in the era of technologies and information, scholars have vigorously studied the Internet in terms of its potential to create the ideal situation for the public sphere. They focus on online civic discussion and civic participation and examine them empirically based on the above standards of Habermas's ideal type. In this process, the emerging theory of an aesthetic public sphere online is argued to be nurtured by public discourses around entertainment experiences (Alexander, 2006; Alexander & Smith, 2003a; Jacobs, 2007, 2012; Jones, 2007; Roberge, 2011). For example, Alexander (2006) argues that civil society should be constructed as a solidarity sphere that is independent from power relations, the market and the state, and it aims to reveal the empirical nature of feeling for others in social life. Jacobs (2007) has recently used the term of "aesthetic public sphere" to indicate that all forms of cultural production can work as sites for expressing dissent and advocacy. From this sense, while agreeing with cultural citizenship on the connection between media aesthetic experiences and broader civic concerns, the aesthetic public sphere theory is also alerted to the formation of an alternative public sphere around media experiences and its connection to the political public sphere. This suggests not only a more significant civic role for entertainment media reinforcing the core arguments of cultural citizenship, but also extends the Habermasian political public sphere to the online aesthetic public sphere.

The theories of cultural citizenship and the aesthetic public sphere have been discussed at length in most developed democracies, while this research area has received little attention in China. It is within this debate that I aim to explore the aesthetic public sphere in the Chinese context for a more culturally comprehensive examination of citizenship. In particular, this perspective of cultural citizenship encourages me to take on the broad exploration about how university students interact with the public sphere in their civic lives: how students view social trust; Chinese mainstream culture and media censorship in terms of their civic opportunities; and what the mass media can do in students' everyday sense-making of their social lives.

1.5 Research questions and research methodology

This research aims to examine the application of the theory of cultural citizenship among Chinese university students. To be specific, this project aims to explore how university students use mass media to develop and express their civic perceptions and conduct civic participation. In addition, according to the literature of the two preconditions identified above, the civic role of university citizenship curricula and the condition of the public sphere also need exploration to account for how cultural citizenship is enacted specifically in the Chinese context.

In order to achieve my objectives in this research, I present the central research questions that orient my exploration:

Does students' civic experience with mass media indicate the potential for cultural citizenship among Chinese university students?

If so, to what extent are relationships between mass media use and civic participation among university students in this study mediated or moderated by students' individual characteristics and social contexts such as citizenship tradition, civic education experience and the national context?

Six auxiliary research question areas are also developed with the intention to clarify my specific research focus:

1. Within university students' attitudes towards university citizenship curricula, how do they view their civic experience that is prompted by the curriculum in their universities?
2. Within university students' attitudes towards mass media's implication for citizenship, how do university students view their civic experience that is prompted by the mass media?
3. What is the general picture of students' mass media use? How do university students commence activity online? How do they commence relevant civic activities offline?
4. Can the mass media meet the expectation of engaging young people in the public

sphere and of creating new forms of political and civic culture among young people? What are the different effects of various types of mass media on students' political participation or wider civic participation offline?

5. What motivates students to become involved in civic participation in the university and through the mass media?
6. What obstacles do university students mention when talking about their civic experience through mass media? How do they deal with these obstacles?

In order to answer the research questions, this thesis is based on the analysis and interpretation of two distinctive sets of empirical data: the first set comes from a small-scale questionnaire survey among university students in one selected university in China, while the second set is from twelve in-depth, face to face semi-structured interviews conducted in this surveyed university. The questionnaire provides quantitative data about university students' use of mass media, modes of civic participation and civic education experience. The interviews further attempt to gain a deeper understanding and explanations of students' civic perceptions and civic behaviours by providing participants with more chances to reflect.

1.6 Issues that emerged from the research process

Finding emerged from the research in several areas in three broad themes: enactment of, opportunities for and barriers to cultural citizenship. The general findings in this study firstly confirm the central argument of cultural citizenship among university students, which means students' experience through mass media, especially their aesthetic experience under new mass media, has civic implications, as mass media has provided a forum for their civic expression and discussion. Secondly, the Party has played a significant role in encouraging participation among large amounts of students. In addition, new mass media has the potential for developing the public sphere for university students, as students' civic experience through new mass media indicates the promising area of the informal public sphere in the Chinese context. Thirdly, there is found a disconnection observed between students' ideals of civic participation and participation opportunities that exist in practice. The findings show that an ideal public sphere for civic expression and

civic participation among university students is not yet fully realized, and this is consistent with the developmental state of civic culture in China.

The implications of the thesis findings vary for different stakeholders in higher education, including educational practitioners, policy makers and researchers. First, the intention of this research is to provide a deeper understanding of the issues related to civic perceptions and civic participation among university students, so for educational practitioners it may contribute to improving the delivery and implementation of citizenship education curricula in the higher education sector. To be specific, how to encourage a new understanding of citizenship and authentic civic participation appears to be an urgent task among university citizenship practitioners. Second, since the study is further set in the specific historical, social, political, economic and cultural background of contemporary Chinese higher education, for policy makers, this research may also be a helpful resource when considering what necessary reforms and improvements should be carried out in educational policies as well as political policies for nurturing a positive environment for university students' active civic participation. Third, for citizenship researchers, this study should offer them a new direction of citizenship understanding and a better understanding of the impact of citizenship education on students' civic attitudes and behaviours. In addition, the civic role of mass media among students needs to be further explored for its research significance in the Chinese context.

1.7 The structure and content of the thesis

There are eight chapters in this research thesis. Following this introductory chapter which provides a rationale for my interest in researching Chinese students' engagement with cultural citizenship, I then present the argument of my thesis in the next seven chapters which are summarized below.

Chapter Two is a literature review on the particular dimension of citizenship that is cultural citizenship and on its two preconditions in the western context. Specifically, the notion of 'cultural citizenship' is first reviewed from political theories, sociology and cultural studies,

and then its particular relevance for this research is proposed. It then explains why this term is so important and presents its implications for citizenship learning. In the ensuing parts, two preconditions for cultural citizenship: civic participation and “the public sphere” are further respectively discussed to understand the possibility of cultural citizenship in the western context. Then I continue to provide a descriptive literature review about academic and empirical research on the democratic implications of students’ increased use of mass media. The intention is to provide further clarity for constructing a conceptual framework for understanding cultural citizenship.

In chapter Three, relevant preconditions for cultural citizenship are accordingly explored in literature in the Chinese context to examine the possibility of cultural citizenship theoretically. I begin by analysing the historical development of citizenship and current practices of citizenship education in China with the intention to examine “participation” in that context. In the ensuing section, I discuss the quality of “the public sphere” in China based on analysing mainstream culture and media censorship. Relevant mass media research is further reviewed to examine its civic implication among university students. The chapter ends by arguing for the need to explore cultural citizenship among university students in a wider picture.

Chapter Four presents my conceptual framework in two parts that are structurally based on the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, and also describes and justifies my research methodology. In the first half of this chapter, the conceptual framework for answering research questions is developed. On the one hand, it places university students in a wider context to investigate their understanding of two preconditions for cultural citizenship in China; on the other hand, it examines the interaction between students’ background, mass media and civic experience. In the second half of this chapter, my research methodology and adopted methods for conducting this study are described. First, the employment of a mixed-methods approach is explained and justified from ontological and epistemological standpoints. Then I explain the staged research process and each research method in detail. The discussion of data management and analysis and potential

ethical issues was followed.

Chapter Five and Chapter Six focus on analysing the empirical data gathered from various strands of the research project. Chapter Five analyses the questionnaire data which was gathered from a sample of 212 university students. After presenting the main findings according to the sequence of auxiliary research questions, it identifies possible themes which are to be explored further in the interview data analysis. Chapter Six then moves on to analyse the qualitative data collected among twelve interview participants with the intention to provide relevant explanations for the themes that were detected from the quantitative findings in Chapter Five.

A discussion of both sets of findings is conducted in Chapter Seven in an attempt to situate the key findings in relation to the existing literature. Firstly, it discusses the civic role of mass media, and provides relevant explanations for the findings. Secondly, it further analyses the civic role of popular culture and the social capital which is essentially at work in students' civic participation respectively. Then it leads to discuss the potential of cultural citizenship, and argues for the new direction of citizenship learning for Chinese university students. It goes on to analyse further the disconnection between students' expectation of civic participation and their actual practice of civic participation, finally followed by discussion of existing barriers to the enactment of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context.

Lastly, Chapter Eight sets out to reframe some principle finding as conclusions in order to clarify the logic of my findings in relation to the themes of enactment of, opportunities for and barriers to cultural citizenship among Chinese university students. The chosen research methodology is reviewed and the research questions revisited to gauge whether those research questions have been answered. I continue to discuss the implications for the various parties of education practitioners, policy makers and citizenship researchers. Finally, I reflect on the potential contribution that this study may make to citizenship education in China, identifying limitations as well as possible areas for further research.

Chapter Two Examination of cultural citizenship in the western context

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to conduct a thorough literature review of cultural citizenship in the western context. It attempts to provide a conceptual framework as well as a wide contextual background for exploring the enactment of cultural citizenship among university students in my research of the Chinese context. It is divided into three main sections. In the first of these sections, three different approaches to the notion of cultural citizenship are reviewed, which are respectively from political theories, sociology and cultural studies. The aim is to understand how certain civic practices can be considered as cultural in preparation for the particular understanding of this term that is used in the research to follow in this thesis. In the second section, two preconditions for cultural citizenship, namely participation and “the public sphere”, have been identified from the literature to further account for the possibility of cultural citizenship in the western context, and based on the view that different development of participation and the public sphere can be found in different contexts. Relevant aspects are examined to see how cultural citizenship is promoted in educational contexts and national contexts, especially in the UK. Finally, in order to draw a further descriptive picture of the application of cultural citizenship, the third section reviews relevant theoretical and empirical research on the topic of mass media’s civic implications, the main area in which cultural citizenship is displayed. Its intention is to help the reader to gain a clear understanding of how research has been undertaken, as well as to provide additional evidence for the emergent conceptual framework of the study.

2.2 Citizenship: what makes it cultural?

The concept of citizenship for centuries has been traditionally seen as the membership of a bounded community, with rights and responsibilities belonging to a nation-state, a “people”, and a particular territory (Dolby, 2006; Heater, 1999; Marshall, 1970). It is also defined by who is to be included and excluded from the political community (Stevenson,

2001). Therefore, the significance of traditional borders, the role of the nation-state and national governance as well as national citizenship is emphasized in the traditional notion of citizenship (O'Brien, 1992; Ohmae, 1995; Urry, 1998).

In fact, it is an essentially contested concept within the coincident occurrence of political-legal citizenship and social-cultural citizenship (Geijsel et al., 2012). However, the cultural dimension of citizenship has received much less attention in the traditional citizenship understanding than the other dimensions of citizenship (Etzioni, 1995; Pettit, 1997; Putnam, 1999). The changing social-cultural realities over the past decade or so have revealed the potential limitations of citizenship which strictly pays attention to its legal-formal dimension (Hermes & Dahlgren, 2006). Challenged by globalization, scholars have further discussed conceptualizations of citizenship in myriad ways, and motivate us to examine citizenship using a broader lens (Yu, 2007). Some scholars believe that national citizenship is now being to some extent weakened and it is necessary to come up with a new form of citizenship (Davies et al., 2005). Specifically, Delanty (2000) argues for a shift from national citizenship to global citizenship. Similarly, Turner (2001) points out that globalization raises new questions about individual identity and thus multi-cultural membership needs to be considered through the possession of citizenship status. In this regard, contemporary citizenship in a cosmopolitan age is not necessarily restricted to its relationship between a state, a people and a particular piece of land (Dolby, 2006). Rather, it is a way to re-imagine and practice citizenship, which is not just focused on dominant definitions of citizenship and political communication, but also helps people to see the full picture of citizenship issues in daily existence (Wu, 2012).

Toby Miller (1998) viewed this understanding of citizenship as “cultural citizenship”, as he contends that “citizenship has always been cultural” (2007, p.51). In the past decade or so, there has been a burgeoning literature on the construction of “cultural citizenship”. Scholars have attempted diverse definitions of the term based on different orientations to see how culture is to be brought into the sphere of citizenship (Coleman, 2006, 2007; Cunningham, 2001; Hermes, 2001, 2005, 2006; Miller, 1998, 2007; Stevenson, 2003). The

development of this notion is reviewed below, and its understanding in this study is then proposed in detail.

2.2.1 Relating to political theory

The notion of cultural citizenship first appeared in the late 1980s (Miller, 2002), when it was used by some American anthropologists to describe Chicano people's claims and ideas related to citizenship issues in particular towns of certain states of the United States (Rosaldo, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c). To be specific, cultural citizenship grants those subordinated or excluded groups in a certain state the possibilities to legitimate their rights to be different and possess their own cultural identity. Delanty (2002) proposed that this approach of cultural citizenship is heavily influenced by the political theory of multicultural politics, as the acknowledgement by law of one's cultural forms, such as cultural resources and cultural capital, would reflect their formal legal status in a given society.

Kymlicka and Norman (2000) are main contributors to this approach of cultural citizenship, seeking to bridge citizenship with diversity. They focused on the concerns of liberal multiculturalism and the accommodation of difference, and further strived for the balance between collective minority cultures and individual majority cultures (Miller, 2002). For instance, Kymlicka (1995) argues that cultural membership provides support for self-identity and dignity, belonging and mutual responsibility (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 89). Other scholars have also used the term of cultural citizenship to emphasize the importance of cultural diversity in citizenship (Rosaldo, 1997; Ong, 1999). For instance, Young (1989) argued that citizenship must take cultural differences into account, and emphasized the importance of cultural differences and collective rights in her concept of differentiated citizenship (1989, p.258). Rosaldo (1997, p.36) tries to include aspects of gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality as parts of citizenship, and further emphasizes cultural rights and cultural expression.

However, the concerns of cultural citizenship related to political theories in Kymlicka and

Norman's work (2000) mainly reflect issues that are more related to the context of North American and Canadian debates, therefore, it indicates that this approach is more confined within a certain state (Delanty, 2002). On the contrary, Ong (1999) argues that flexible citizenship characterised by multiple loyalties which could transcend the domain of any specific state should receive greater recognition.

2.2.2 Relating to sociology

Globalization, decolonization and multiculturalism in recent decades have created a cultural context characterized by cultural democratization, which provides a solid foundation for the development of cultural citizenship (Turner, 2001). Citizenship is not only related to legal rights such as cultural rights, rather it requires the creation of certain virtues such as shared values, cultural commitment, cultural competence and multicultural forms of community building (Turner, 1994). In this case, the concept of cultural citizenship is a reaction to fragmentation, chaos and conflicts among all groups of people in the western context. Stevenson (2001) groups this approach of cultural citizenship with social theories, and Delanty (2002) contends that the sociological perspective stresses the centrality of culture itself, calling for a broad and adequate understanding of citizenship (Delanty, 2002).

Compared with the first approach to cultural citizenship which is mostly located within cultural diversity problems in established national frameworks and is characteristic of a highly normative political theory (Delanty, 2002), culture in this sociological approach does not refer to cultural diversity and cultural empowerment within political-law theories, but does refer to cultural resources, identities, cultural competence and cultural policies of the polity (Stevenson, 2003). These efforts could be viewed as the fight and struggle for creating a democratic society where a wide array of citizens could lead their meaningful and respected lives (Stevenson, 2010, p.289), and could participate in cultural life and identity construction for their citizenship understanding (Delanty, 2002). As Turner (2001) has explained:

Cultural citizenship can be described as cultural empowerment, namely the capacity to participate effectively, creatively, and successfully within a national culture. Superficially such a form of citizenship would involve access to educational institutions, the possession of an appropriate “living” language, the effective ownership of cultural identity through national citizenship membership and the capacity to hand on and transfer to future generations the richness of a national cultural heritage (Turner, 2001, p.12) .

This sociological approach provides citizens with a flexible form of citizenship (Ong, 1999), and entitles them with chances to participate in cultural domains locally, nationally and globally (Turner, 2001). In this regard, what is at stake in this approach to cultural citizenship is cultural rights rather than minority rights, what Delanty (2002) also terms as cosmopolitan citizenship. This approach of cultural citizenship “offers a potentially more far-reaching model for democratic citizenship and might be useful in addressing the urgent need for anti-racism and citizenship policies that might stem the rising tide of xenophobia” (Delanty, 2002, p. 64). Cultural citizenship could then be seen as “a site of contestation, negotiation and struggle over cultural meaning and social violence” (Rosaldo, 1997, p.37).

Cultural policies have been employed to improve the practice of this sociological approach of cultural citizenship. For instance, Bennett (1998) and fellow theorists in cultural policy studies focused on a specific set of cultural competencies and international cooperation that governments should guarantee to their citizenry (Bennett & Mercer, 1998). Bennett (1995) argues that the Museum should be understood as a place for a wide range of social performance instead of just being treated as a place of instruction by the government. Governments have the responsibility in ensuring that the production and circulation of a diversity of cultural products reflects the different values and meanings, which are the requirements of the makeup of civil society (Wang, 2013).

2.2.3 Relating to cultural studies

The first approach above concentrates on the importance of minority rights and cultural difference, while the second approach extends this discussion to be concerned with cultural rights and cultural competence. Moreover, as cultural citizenship is defined as “the

capacity to participate effectively, creatively and successfully within a national culture” (Turner, 2001), the sociological approach emphasizes the importance of a national culture and cultural policies granted to citizens. It is notable that the essential role of “nation” is suggested in each of these first two approaches to cultural citizenship. However, as an era of globalization and cosmopolitan trends has blurred the boundary between popular culture and the national culture, the “nation” is no longer the only scale by which cultural activities should be considered (Hermes, 1998). Turner (2001) claims that it has been increasingly difficult to describe cultural citizenship related to a national culture, and he argues to re-conceive cultural citizenship by discussing the possible development of electronic democracy via the Internet (Turner, 2001). Thus, the notion of cultural citizenship is also discussed related with cultural studies, and the combination of citizenship with cultural studies is a further step in trying to understand citizenship issues in globalization, especially in the era of popular culture in the 21st century.

As people have spent more time in social interaction and mass cultural consumption, key insights in cultural studies have pointed to the functional effects of these activities on citizenship and the processes of becoming citizens (Allor & Gagnon, 1994; Miller, 1993). It also shows how popular media implicitly provides a forum and materials that help us to reflect on what connects and divides citizens (Hermes & Dahlgren, 2006). The main contribution of cultural citizenship here is that it tells us that citizenship and civic activities need not be constrained as they are in the traditional understanding in “daily fealty to the corporate capitalist state” (Miller, 1998, p.218), but can be fostered by relevant interaction in daily life that can be endorsed by civic values and civic participation. In this sense, popular culture and mass media serve as important generators of cultural citizenship.

People have regarded popular culture as a domain in which we could “work through” the process which is characterised by ideological ambiguities and uncertainty in our times (Ellis, 2000). For example, John Hartley (1999) has argued that television is a “trans modern” teacher and medium, and is capable of teaching us to think about both identity and difference. What is more, audiences, especially young students, can refer to uses of

popular culture such as crime fictions, football or popular television series to help themselves to gain a good appreciation of identity and understanding (Hermes, 2005). To be specific, Hermes argues that such popular texts as a fictional television show, though mostly associated with leisure and pleasure, can provide more experiential knowledge for citizens' self-reflection and outreach for civic values (Hermes, 2006). As people make sense of their experience in daily life, the increasing interplay between public and private life contributes to the development of civic skills and civic competencies (Dahlgren, 2006). Therefore, it would be more productive to consider how politics can enter into the daily lives of young people rather than to conceptualize citizenship as a bounded module in a limited political context. In this sense, the focus on cultural citizenship from cultural studies can offer a much wider platform for understanding resources for citizenship.

2.2.4 My configuration of cultural citizenship in this research

It could be observed from above analysis that the notion of cultural citizenship is first pointed out in response to the great wave of immigration and multiculturalism in the past years (Miller, 2002). An increasingly mobile workforce around the globe poses challenges to the traditional citizenship which is allocated by the nation-state, and marginalized groups of people calls for more inclusion and recognition in mainstream culture. However, besides cultural diversity and cultural rights that are both related to a certain nation and the concerns of multiculturalism, a more flexible combination of questions could emerge from the consideration of cultural citizenship. The notion of cultural citizenship has derived from new ways of thinking about the relation between culture and citizenship, such that we can add to our understanding of "citizenship" by considering the influence of cultural experiences (Couldry, 2005). For example, Couldry (2005) has provided some possibilities to continue this thinking: "What does culture contribute to citizenship? What would a culture of citizenship look like? What new cultures of citizenship might be emerging? "

While new perspectives on citizenship are emerging and have provided a wide range of alternative approaches for understanding citizenship issues in the western contexts, this research aims to explore cultural citizenship within the educational setting in China. To

promote this research aim, I define my construction of cultural citizenship here and try to enrich traditional conceptions of citizenship in the Chinese context in Chapter Three.

Not only is participation in formal democracies generally in decline, but also engagement in the associational life of civil society is decreasing (Putnam, 2000). Formal participation cannot be understood as the only significant domain when it comes to citizenship as lived practices (Hermes, 2006). Rather citizenship theories need further development in order to cover the informal domain of citizenship and also to integrate both the public and private spheres (Janoski & Gras, 2002). Therefore, it is intriguing to explore the cultural domain for possible practices and platforms which link private actions to the public sphere.

Fortunately, the cultural domain has revealed itself as a potential place for students' active citizenship. For instance, Natalie Beale (2008) justifies the reasonability of everyday citizenship by arguing that it is essential to consider the spaces or sites and contextual structures within which young people often operate. Not only the formal spaces and structures such as schools and youth councils for young people, but also the informal and alternative sites and contexts which young people have voluntarily found and developed for themselves should also be included for consideration (Dickinson et al., 2008). Alexander (2008) also argues for a bottom-up approach to the conceptualization of citizenship, which is drawn from her empirical study in low-income areas of Newcastle, England. It is found that this group of young people, who are always neglected within political discourses, can still be regarded as active citizens through their voluntary activities and everyday engagements within their neighbourhood. In other words, for Alexander, taking everyday life seriously as a site consisting of ethical daily practices and cultural or lifestyle politics can constitute an arena in which people can think about civic and social issues (Dickinson et al., 2008).

Similarly, Felski (1999) also expresses that everyday life is a way of experiencing the world, which means that everyday life is significant for thinking through citizenship issues by virtue of its reliance on pragmatic prioritization. In Jim McGuigan's (2005) work, he

argues that it is a serious misrecognition of citizen engagement if we exclude everyday life, affection, and feeling of pleasure away from the domain of our understanding of democratic participation, and he continues to point out that the cultural public sphere provides vehicles for people's thought, feeling, discussion and argumentation (McGuigan, 2005).

Toby Miller (1993, 1998, 2006) then explicitly states that "culture is a significant area in the daily organization of fealty to the cultural-capitalist state" (1993, p.218), and goes on to separate the concerns of cultural citizenship which is ("the right to know and speak") from those of political citizenship which is ("the right to reside and vote") and economic citizenship which is ("the right to work and prosper") (2006, p.35). Thus, Miller (2006) regards culture as a distinctive dimension, which should be added to T.H. Marshall's famous model consisting of three dimensions of citizenship which includes civic rights, political rights, and social rights (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992). John Hartley (1999) then speaks of media citizenship and DIY citizenship, as popular culture is understood as "a mutual, reciprocal and interdependent site of producing knowledge" (1999, p. 58).

The ideas of cultural citizenship proposed by Joke Hermes (2005) provide the most significant influence on the direction of the research in this thesis. Hermes tries to figure out how cultural citizenship as a term can be employed to understanding identity construction in less formal everyday practices, which relates to representation, ideology, implicit moral rights and obligations (Hermes, 2005). While ordinary people do not necessarily gain political knowledge and do not feel motivated to articulate their civic opinions through formal political channels, Hermes (2005) argued that life experiences and emotions are important parts of public communication, offering new means to connect information and share experiences (Hermes, 2006).

In relation to the spheres of everyday life, there is a limited but growing literature explicitly linking studies of mass media including the Internet with the idea of cultural citizenship (Burgess et al., 2006; Goode, 2010; Livingstone, 2003; Murdock, 2004;

Uricchio, 2004). The essence of this argument is about mass media's potential role for promoting democratic citizenship. For instance, Hermes (2006) points out that there is more fruitful to take an even-handed look at what popular culture means and could mean to us, rather than idealizing or demonizing it. Similarly, a leading scholar of media, citizenship, and civic engagement, Peter Dahlgren (2009) argues that the Internet and digital media's potential for providing a space for the civic engagement for young people is indisputable. It could be viewed as a space where they could be provided with the chance to learn civic knowledge, establish their civic identities, learn necessary participation skills and put those skills into civic practices (Pinto & Hughes, 2011). Dolby (2006) also argues that mass media such as television shows are not simply entertainment; rather they are forums through which ordinary people could voice their opinions and engage in public discussion, while sometimes they are not provided the same chance to conduct civic talks through other formal established political channels. Thus cultural citizenship is particularly an active process that involves the basic element of people's daily existence and it includes the habits and different ways how they use and interact with popular culture and mass media (Dolby, 2006).

Scholars generally conduct citizenship research within the discipline of politics, attempting at creating particular policies (Coleman & Blumler, 2009). However, Kenny and Stevenson (1993) claim that the consideration of citizenship issues need to be taken beyond the confines of political policy makers. In fact, cultural citizenship is an emergent area of interdisciplinary concerns (Miller, 2002), and has particular implications for educational institutions (Stevenson, 2003). Although these above three approaches of cultural citizenship emphasize different aspects related to issues such as cultural rights, cultural diversity and cultural understanding, the fundamental principle of this notion is to promote dialogues and to build a communicative civil society (Stevenson, 2003). Isin and Turner (2002) report that neo-liberalism has led to a widespread erosion in the value of learning across society as education becomes reduced to a passport for employability. This case could also be observed in citizenship education in most countries, which emphasizes the need of society and the economy over that of the individual. By arguing for the political

and civic relevance of people's daily experience, especially their mass media use, the cultural citizenship perspective provides some fresh insights into university students' civic learning and their interaction with mass media in daily life. For instance, it is argued that a form of education should seek to realize the ideal of inter-cultural education which is based on the construction of an active self and the formation of meaningful social institutions (Touraine, 2000) or to search for the reconnection of "self" and "Other" through dialogues in a global context (Stevenson, 2003). Thus, my research intends to relocate it within educational contexts and citizenship learning.

2.2.5 Summary

To summarize, the term cultural citizenship has brought significant revisions to traditional conceptualizations of citizenship. Although discussions about identity politics for cultural recognition in the first approach and cultural rights in the second approach are influential branches of cultural citizenship, the cultural revision of the third approach provides a more relevant direction for discussion in this research, especially for young people in this mass media age.

On the one hand, this perspective argues that citizens heavily rely on their life experiences in understanding social and civic issues. On the other hand, cultural citizenship is understood as an active process where the interaction with mass media provides the connection and dialogues between people's daily lives and the public sphere, and exerts real political influence in their opinion formation and expression. Therefore, these kinds of interactions are argued to constitute another part of civic practices and participation in people's daily lives. In this regard, cultural citizenship presents a more organic view in pointing out how everyday citizens can creatively use daily experiences to reflect on their identities and life situations. It also indicates educational implications for young people's citizenship learning through everyday experiences.

2.3 Precondition for cultural citizenship (1): participation

In an attempt to understand how emerging practices, in certain contexts, contribute to people's civic purpose, Uricchio (2004) proposes a model of cultural citizenship in the following terms:

Community, freed from any necessary relationship to the nation-state, and participation, in the sense of active, then, are two prerequisites for the enactment of cultural citizenship... And it is in this context that I want to assert that certain forms of ... participatory culture ... in fact constitute sites of cultural citizenship. I refer here particularly to collaborative communities, sites of collective activity that exist thanks only to the creative contributions, sharing, and active participation of their members. (Uricchio, 2004, p. 148)

Thus, Uricchio (2004) points out two preconditions at work for the enactment of cultural citizenship: one is active participation and the other is community, separated from any necessary relationship to the nation-state. In particular, he further took "participation" as a fundamental element for cultural citizenship. Stevenson (2003) also argues that the achievement of widespread participation on issues related to common concerns is at the center of discussing cultural citizenship. While the cultural citizenship perspective is best understood analytically rather than empirically in section 2.2 above, section 2.3 specifically discusses the first precondition of participation with the intention to explore how the quality of that participation contributes to cultural citizenship in practice. The second precondition for cultural citizenship is discussed in section of 2.4 below.

Scholars argue that some forms of mass media: radio, films, the Internet and art productions could be considered as sites of cultural citizenship, as those indirect public processes are characterized with participatory culture (Miller, 1998). However, as well as the participation occurring virtually, others occurring face to face in everyday life also enable unconventional expressions of participatory culture (Burgess et al., 2006). For instance, it is found that social circles which individuals create and maintain with the help of information and communication technologies (ICT) transcend seamlessly from online to offline face to face communication and from offline to online, even if the transition does

not happen immediately (Mesch & Levanon, 2003). In particular, Uricchio's (2004) understanding of "participation" here is presented in a more robust sense, akin to the claiming and expanding of rights that can be found in workplaces, churches and activist groups. In this sense, the literature reflects that the differing nature of participation characterised with participatory culture in different sites could contribute to cultural citizenship. It leads me to propose that citizenship learning should include a broad understanding of the nature of participation in both its historical and current phases.

2.3.1 The concept of participation

Participation in civic activities is seen as a key indicator and determinant of a socially healthy, engaged, and equal society (Longford, 2005). The term of civic participation is further proposed, and is often used interchangeably with several similar terms such as "civic engagement", "political engagement", "political participation", "public involvement", or "citizen engagement". However, participation is the social phenomenon with multiple dimensions (Norris, 1999; Pattie et al., 2004; Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002). Forms of participation may vary significantly in different countries according to their particular contexts (Haste, 2004), thus there seems to exist a lack of consensus regarding both its definition and the measurement of participation. For the purpose of this research, the notion of civic participation employed is close to the definition proposed in a regional study of East Asia and the Pacific by the organization Innovations in Civic Participation, that it is "individual and collective actions to improve wellbeing of communities or nations" (Eapro, 2008).

As a multidimensional concept, civic engagement encompasses a wide range of activities across the social, political, economic and cultural spheres. Scholars have generally developed "civic participation" into several sub-categories. For instance, Jenkins et al. (2003) proposed three types of civic involvement: electoral activity (voting behaviour and political office), civic activity (problem solving helping others and volunteering in the community) and political voice (activities related with political expression: such as participating in boycotts and petitions). Longford (2005) used another three-category

classification to define civic participation: “political participation (voting, attending public meetings, etc.); community service (volunteering and charitable work); and cultural participation (participating in arts and crafts guilds or cultural groups, communal storytelling, etc.)” (2005, p. 5-6). This indicates that generally two indicators can be used for civic participation: political participation and broad civic participation.

2.3.2 The historical development of participation in relation to citizenship

The concept of participation has a long history. Historically speaking, the indicator of political participation is emphasized in ancient Greek polis (city state), which is the original democratic institution where male citizens over 18 were expected to undergo military training, and it was deemed as an essential condition for controlling its conquered neighbours. Sparta emerged as the first example of a State providing a structured program of military training for its future citizens in the sixth century BC (Heater, 2002), and this program was laden with expectations of devotion to the State. An even earlier expression of participation was in the *Ecclesia of Athens*, which stated that the main civilian virtue of male citizens is to make a difference in consensus seeking and democratic decision making in the polis (Cunningham, 1972; Fishkin, 1991). Aristotle claimed that “those who have the right to participate in discussion and judicial procedure can be called citizens of the state” (Warrington, 1961).

In Roman times, citizens’ active participation in national political affairs was also advocated, and the domain of citizen was enlarged to include most residents within a polis, which reflected the efforts to make citizenship more inclusive rather than exclusive. This system of course makes no mention of the large number of slaves who had no status. Another contribution at that time was that citizens’ private rights were acknowledged by law. To be specific, a citizen should have its own rights and responsibilities. A citizen should conform to the state and the law, while the state should respect citizens’ certain freedom (Ma, 1997). However, the development of citizenship stopped after the Roman Empire was destroyed in the 5th century. In the dark days of the Middle Ages, citizens were replaced by subjects who were attached to feudal kings and churches, and their

participation in any voluntary association was also limited (Cunningham, 1972). It was not until the 11th century that the notion of citizenship revived with the development of commercial activities in the city states of Renaissance Italy.

By the 18th century, Europe was swept by the new thinking of the Enlightenment (Hooker, 1996). The influence of the church and the state became reduced, and people were free to discover their own ability and development. Thus, the value of liberalism became the focus of citizenship understanding. Unlike devotion to the state in ancient Rome, liberalism believes that individuals enjoy priority rights and freedom to pursue their own desires and interests rationally on the condition that they did not harm others' interests, while the state should protect those rights and exert least influence on citizens (Oldfield, 1990, p.2). Although rights to participate had long been central to liberal thought, civic participation was no longer an integral part of people's lives, as liberal scholars argued that not every citizen had the obligation to be involved in public affairs because there were other forms of existence for human beings (Liu, 1998), and they were only required to carry out basic responsibilities such as obeying the law and paying taxes.

A further broadening of democratic practices was observed in the 19th century. T.H. Marshall (1964), the representative of liberal citizenship, was concerned about the historical development of civil rights, political rights and social rights in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries in the British context. He argued that the principle of civil and political rights had been achieved in the 18th and 19th centuries, while the 20th century had witnessed the idea of social rights. However, this understanding of citizenship was criticized by many scholars. On the one hand, the possibility of full male employment, the dominance of the nation border and the separation between an elite culture and a popular mass culture in his dimensions of citizenship indicated an exclusive understanding of citizenship (Stevenson, 2003), which was later attacked by the ideas of global citizenship. On the other hand, liberal citizenship needs to be supplemented with republican citizenship emphasizing more civic participation. A society possessed with active citizens requires both the protection underpinned by rights as well as opportunities to participate (Stevenson, 2003, p.7-8). Only

if political rights are guaranteed in the public sphere, can individuals' freedom be realized in practice (Arden, 1996).

Liberalism has created a theoretical and practical dilemma, as it neglected the value of the community and inevitably resulted in atomistic individuals. The communitarian understanding of citizenship argues that an individual's sense of identity is produced only through their relations with others in the community, and emphasizes the importance of the socially-embedded citizen and of community belonging (Smith, 1998, p.117). In addition, civic republican thinking places more emphasis on citizens' active participation. In this sense, the republican approach of citizenship has placed an emphasis on inclusive participation as the foundation for democratic practices, suggesting a more active dimension of citizenship: one which tends to recognize citizens as positive "makers and shapers" of society rather than as negative "users and choosers" of the interventions or services which are produced or designed by others (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000).

To summarize, citizenship is never static, but is generally with different meanings in different contexts, and political participation is historically regarded as a crucial indicator of citizenship. Recent works in contemporary citizenship theory attempt to unite the liberal emphasis on individual rights and equality and the civic republican emphasis on civic participation and responsibility (Gaventa, 2002). It shows people's continuing active efforts to balance the relations between individuals and the state and between private life and public life in any particular political community. The emphasis of civic participation was always inherent within the notion of citizenship in the western context.

2.3.3 The decline of participation

Although the importance of participation for a democratic society has been argued, there is sufficient evidence for noting a decline in civic participation in the western context. The supporting evidence is that citizens have been reluctant to attend active democratic practices such as voting in elections (Albrecht, 2006; IDEA, 2002; Offe, 2002; Putnam, 1995). In addition, various recent studies have sounded the alarm for the decline of civic

and political participation particularly among young people (Putnam, 2000; Rosenstone & Hansen, 2003; Skocpol, 2003; Quintelier & Vissers, 2007). Bennett (2008) described it as the youth disengaged paradigm, as young people no longer participate actively in formal voluntary associations or in various forms of civic life (Marsh et al., 2006; Zukin et al., 2006). Olsen (1969) proposed two kinds of reasons for people's civic alienation: the first is that citizens are objectively prevented from participating effectively in wider life by political systems, while the second is that citizens are subjectively unwilling to participate, as they think it is meaningless.

Nevertheless, other research shows that whereas the level of political participation is declining among the young people, the level of community activities and civic participation is still rising (Eden & Roker, 2002; Zukin et al., 2006). Hence, Bennett's (2008) description of the youth engaged paradigm is understandable, as this paradigm pays more attention to young people's personal expression and informal participation in collective spaces. A transformation in how young people get involved in civic actions is observed (Bang, 2005; Li & Marsh, 2008; Quintelier, 2007). In fact, civic participation now takes place everywhere, in people's homes, schools, places of employment as well as through mass media (Schudson, 1998). For instance, research in contemporary Latin-American societies showed that young people are choosing participatory ways which are related to their daily lives, but are not in traditional organizations (Balardini, 2000; Pérez Expósito, 2007).

While disagreements exist, Bennett (2000) offers his understanding that the changing picture of young people's civic engagement are responses to changing societies which are linked to more personal lifestyles, thus indicating that participation is no longer confined to traditional formal political arenas, while informal participation in daily life should receive more research attention. Consistent with Uricchio's (2004) understanding of participation in workplaces and civic activities, more attention should be paid to understanding young people's active citizenship in daily life, especially under the influence of mass media.

2.3.4 Participation in citizenship education in England: active citizenship

Active citizenship suggests an active component to citizenship, and it has been defined as: “participation in civic society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy” (Hoskins, 2006). Active citizenship is generally understood as a more participatory form of citizenship and as an active process in a wide range of contexts both in and beyond schools (Nelso & Kerr, 2006), and it specifically refers to activities through volunteering, engagement with public services and democratic participation (Andrews et al., 2008; Heater, 2004; Lister, 2003). In fact, this term derives directly from education field including both formal and non-formal education, for example, adult and vocational education (Holford & van der Veen, 2003) and training (Preston & Green, 2003).

There is growing research interest in citizenship and citizenship education on the agendas of governments and educational agencies (Dudley & Gitelson, 2002; Galston, 2007), and literature on citizenship education frequently places active participation as an ideal goal (Ireland et al., 2006; Nelson & Kerr, 2006; Ross, 2008). The notion of active citizenship can be observed from the purposes of citizenship education documents in most countries. For instance, compulsory citizenship education implemented in September 2002 in England is defined to equip young people with civic knowledge, understanding and skills to play an active role in public life. To be specific, they “are encouraged to play an active role as global citizens in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and wider society” (Department for Education, 2010, p.2). In Scotland, the citizenship curriculum also aims to provide the context for developing active global citizens. Similarly, Llewellyn et al (2007) detailed the emphasis on active citizenship in Canada, and they argued that students should be taught to make informed and active choices about policies and to engage with the community for promoting social changes. In Korea, citizenship education aims to create citizens who can contribute to community development at various levels, and to instil values and attitudes related with a democratic society among students (Kang, 2008).

Various contexts and practices have been explored in citizenship education for their potential influence on students' active citizenship. One aspect of these efforts is to examine within citizenship curriculum settings for civic improvement and democratic citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2006). A recent international survey of civic and citizenship education conducted by the International Association for The Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) covering 38 countries (Schulz et al, 2010) found that the majority of countries provided a specific compulsory civic education course in general education systems. Davies and Issitt (2005) analysed a sample of school textbooks of citizenship education in three countries: Australia, Canada and England, and found that although the resources of textbooks are valuable, citizenship education through these textbooks particularly tend to mould students to subjects of the state authority.

Another aspect is to look beyond curriculum settings in young people's wider context. For instance, Faulks (2006) develops a critique of the Crick Report's sociological limitation, because he believes that the compulsory citizenship education curriculum issued by the Crick Report is defined ideologically narrowly and mechanically by the state. Students are context bound individuals, and they require active engagement and continual reflection upon their particular values and obligations (Faulks, 2006). Stevenson (2003) also proposes his cautious attitudes towards teaching citizenship in the UK secondary schools. In this sense, this aspect of understanding is consistent with a broad conception of democracy: "democracy is not merely a form of government, but is a broad mode of associated living and communicated experience" (Dewey, 1916, p.87).

The direction of exploring active citizenship learning in young people's everyday lives is supported by many scholars, as they believe that young people are not "cultural dopes" who respond mechanically to outside influences, while they are generally more easily influenced by outside factors than older people (Smith et al., 2005, p.246). For example, the surveys in the works of Prime et al. (2002) and Attwood et al. (2003) both argue that getting in touch with other people in the locality can build strong social networks, increase social trust and provide a stepping stone to young people's future social involvement. In

addition, Scheerens (2011) summarized that indicators such as school culture, leadership style and practical opportunities are all influential for citizenship learning.

Lawy and Biesta (2006) argue that curriculum-based citizenship learning could be understood as citizenship-as-achievement with the intention to train young people to become a particular type of democratic citizens. On the contrary, they advocated the notion of citizenship-as-practice (Lawy & Biesta, 2006), which means that young people can automatically learn from participation in wider political and social life. This is also echoed in Osler and Starkey's (2003) argumentation that citizenship "is not a process that can be realized exclusively at schools. Learning is taking place beyond the school and the school needs to build on this learning and to encourage learners to make connections between their experiences and learning in the school and the community" (Osler & Starkey, 2003, p.252).

Competing definitions and modes of citizenship education could be fully and freely debated in democratic contexts, and lead to a coherent vision and varied practices of citizenship education both inside and beyond educational settings (Kerr, 2005). Consistent with above two strands of efforts for exploring active citizenship learning, the IEA Civic Education study employed an octagonal model to analyse the situation of citizenship education in various national settings (Torney-Purta et al., 1999), which was inspired by Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach (1988). The model illustrated in Figure 2.1 was designed on the premise that schools are less of a monopoly to convey the principles of civic education, but rather are only one factor in a comprehensive environment of citizenship learning for individual students.

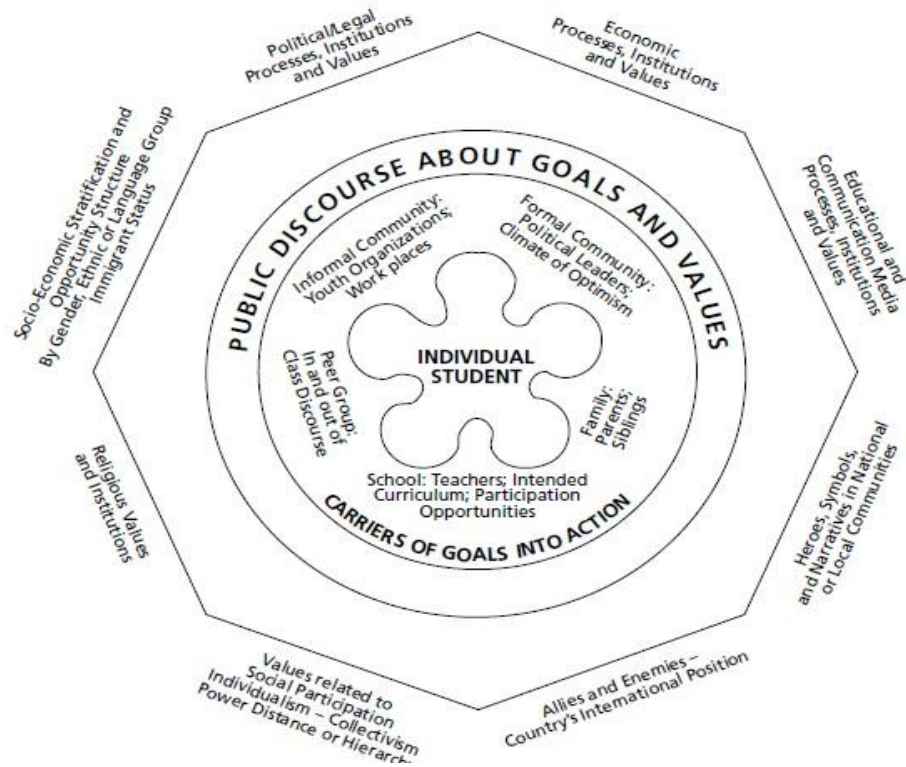


Figure 2. 1: The octagonal model for citizenship learning adopted by the IEA Civic Education study (Torney-Purta et. al., 1999, p.18)

The model in Figure 2.1 consists of two circles: the inner circle exemplifies the carriers of citizenship consciousness, including schools, families, formal community, informal community and peer groups. They are different channels from which students can learn citizenship knowledge or carry out actions related to citizenship. The outer circle represents different aspects of public discourses about citizenship goals and values. These range from politics and economy to social participation and communication, as students' civic perceptions and civic practices are also strongly influenced by educational systems and the contexts where those systems operate such as a country's historical background and political systems. In this regard, this model indicates that citizenship education cannot be viewed in isolation, but should be considered within a broad context.

This model is also employed in the research report of "*Citizenship education in England 2001-2010: young people's practices and prospects for the future: the eighth and final report from the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS)*" (Keating & Mundy, 2010). Besides that, the CELS model also incorporated some important theories used by

political scientists to explore patterns of students' civic engagement and participation, including theories related to social capital, civic voluntarism and cognitive engagement (Kerr & Cleaver, 2004; Whiteley, 2005). Finally, the new model in Figure 2.2 took the form of a procedure line with inputs (background variables of students: former experience, political interest), contexts (sites of citizenship learning) and outcomes (students' behaviours and attitudes).

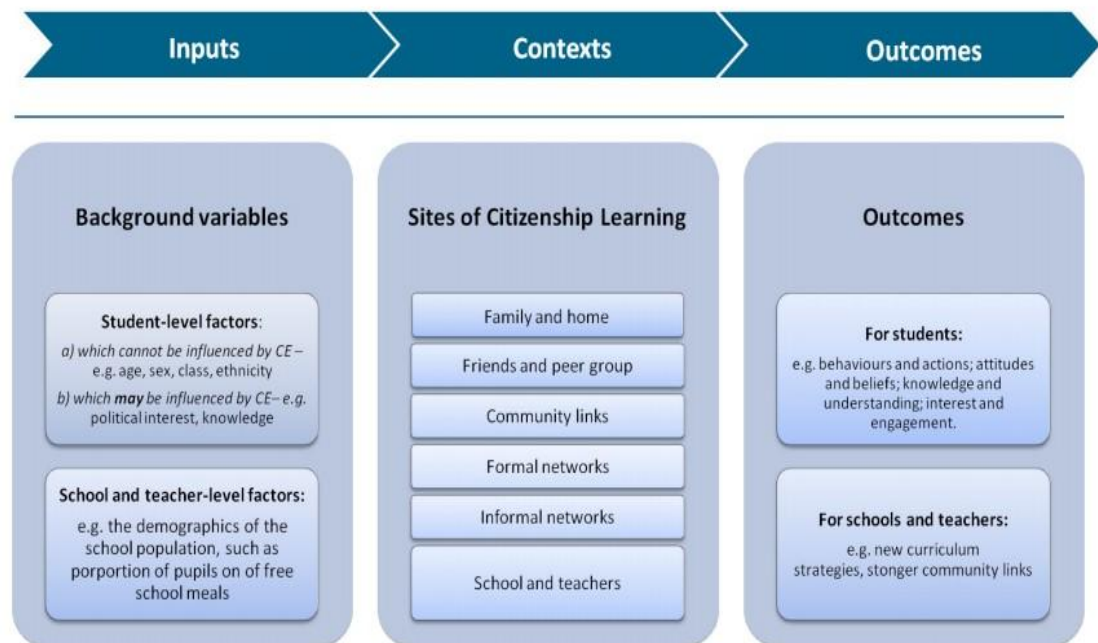


Figure 2. 2: Overarching analytical framework for CELS (Keating & Mundy, 2010)

The CELS research found that young people routinely participate in a range of different practices in places such as the family context, peers circles, schools and colleges, leisure sites, work places and the media environment, and there has been a steady increase in young people's civic and political participation. However, it also argued that although participants became increasingly aware of the importance of politics, only a minority reported that they had learnt a lot of citizenship from citizenship curricula (Keating & Mundy, 2010). Thus it is indicated that the influence of those proposed different settings on their citizenship understanding is different, because young people may have real opportunities for shaping their perceptions in some situations, while they are treated less seriously in some other situations. The research thus revealed that citizenship learning cannot be understood as a one-way-dimensional mechanic process which is confined

within schools and curricula; rather it is grounded and further situated in a complex construction of experiences that may be practiced in the day-to-day lives of young people, and factors such as contexts, relationships and students' dispositions are all interrelated with citizenship learning (Biesta et al., 2009).

Although schools are the obvious place for cultivating virtues related with citizenship (Heater, 1999), the literature shows that we should also consider the possibility that a civic curriculum alone may not be an efficient way of increasing young people's civic participation. It would not always be the case that students knowing more about civic knowledge would actually participate more (Manning & Edwards, 2014). In addition, there are also increasing findings showing that young people's learning in schools and colleges is not always or necessarily positively associated with their experience of citizenship understanding or citizenship education outcomes (Rudduck & Flutter, 2004). In fact, effective citizenship education requires a whole school dimension, which means the educational responsibility for citizenship should not be confined to schools or colleges, nor should it rest with teachers or structuring of the curriculum, but rather behaviours policy and participation opportunities in schools and in the wider community both need to be included (Newton, 2002). Kennedy (2003) expressed the same idea that citizenship teaching should move beyond abstract concepts and give students chances to engage with relevant civic activities both in and outside of their classrooms. For instance, the development of pupil voice (Ruddock, 2003), students' participation in decision making and running school councils are common civic activities which would benefit the development of active citizenship in children and young people (Taylor & Johnson, 2002). Building on the research of social media platforms of the Scottish independence referendum 2014, it is suggested that citizenship education across the UK incorporate strategies which could provide young people with the skills and knowledge to allow them to understand and use social media in more critical and participative ways (Shephard et al., 2015).

2.3.5 Summary

To summarize, the first precondition for cultural citizenship: participation in the western context, is examined in this section. Looking through the historical development of participation, there is a tradition of emphasizing political participation in the nature of citizenship. However, the perceived participation decline recently has diverted attention to study broader civic participation in informal areas among young people. Citizenship education in most countries has placed high emphasis on promoting active citizenship, and research based on the citizenship curriculum in England indicated that citizenship learning is never solely based on a school curriculum, but is closely related with active participation in the school culture as well as in wider society.

Thus, participation refers to the importance of active participation in students' daily lives in the context of this thesis. As a result, this study later largely focuses on broad social and cultural forms of civic engagement among young people. By doing so in the Chinese context, it may lead to an increase in young people's interests in talking about their civic experience, to better equip them with skills needed to participate in other kinds of civic engagement such as social participation and finally to yield out some more fruitful research results.

2.4 Precondition for cultural citizenship (2): the “public sphere”

Community, separated from any necessary relationship to the nation-state, is another precondition for cultural citizenship proposed by Uricchio (2004). Similarly, other scholars also start such discussion of cultural citizenship from the concept of community (Hermes, 2005; Miller, 1998) and also from the notion of the public sphere in Habermas' (1989) work. For instance, Stevenson (2003) argues that the need to develop an inclusive civil society should be addressed in discussing cultural citizenship. The public sphere is understood as a unique world, “free of rivalry and competition, characterized by consensus and cooperation, where everyone can value their potential, develop their personality and live a virtuous life” (Cunningham, 2002, p.7). Thus the public sphere enables citizens to

negotiate and discuss public affairs together (Habermas, 1974, 1989).

There is an argument that is particularly relevant in the process of enacting cultural citizenship, that popular culture and mass media in everyday life in essence constitutes a main site of citizenship for the political needs of some social groups (Cunningham & Sinclair, 2001; Felski, 1989; Hartley, 1999, 2004; Hermes, 2000, 2005; McKee, 2004; Warner, 2005). In other words, theories of cultural citizenship suggest that the role of mass media is in fact of greater significance, which would then extend the Habermasian political public sphere into the digital public sphere. Bearing this in mind, I will then explore a broader understanding of Habermas' ideal model of the public sphere below.

2.4.1 The notion of the public sphere

The search for the public sphere has been a central focus of the debate in the conception of civil society in the western context (Cohen & Arato, 1992). Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere has been influential in political communication research. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Habermas carefully explored the communicative and deliberative characteristics of the public sphere in civil society. To him, the ideal public sphere means "a universal space where rational citizens could organize themselves outside their private spheres, independent from the state at the same time, and then engage in political and public process through critical-rational deliberation", thus "the sphere of private people come together as a public" (1992, p.27). The distinction between public and private sectors is then eroded, making way for a structural transformation in the public sphere, where the state and society interpenetrate through organized interest groups (Habermas, 1990). The key element is concerned with citizens' capacity to express their attitudes, desires and needs, as well as their ability to challenge the assertions of others without fear (Habermas, 1990).

Habermas' model of the public sphere focuses explicitly on politically-oriented venues and does not yet recognize the informational and deliberative functions of mass media (Postman, 1986; Hart, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Wu, 2011). Habermas (1989) expresses his

scepticism that contents of entertainment on the mass media is making individuals into mere consumers of leisure time rather than those who are able to reflect on their identities and seek meaningful rational-critical discussion in the public sphere. On the contrary, only the serious fact-based media, especially news, is deemed as the ideal medium that can promote the fullest function of the public sphere. In addition, Habermas (2006) notes that “the rise of millions of fragmented chat rooms across the world tend instead to lead to the fragmentation of large but politically focused mass audiences into a huge number of isolated issue publics” (Habermas, 2006, p. 423).

Habermas’ classic theory of the public sphere inspires much of today’s debate about mass media and politics, and it generally results in pessimistic evaluations of mass media’s political implications among scholars. To be specific, this political-oriented model dismisses the civic implications of the broadly defined media types such as entertainment programs and social network uses. For instance, Putnam (2000) argues that time spent on TV media could directly to some extent reduce its audience’s available time for their further engagement in civic activities. Moreover, Hart (1999) contends that the media actually divert its viewers’ attention away from core aspects of civic life and make them more isolated and ignorant. While citizens in the political public sphere constantly are ideally depicted as active individuals who seek knowledge, think critically and engage actively in rational public discourses, the image of the audience under mass media is often depicted as passive consumers (Wang, 2011). Bruns (2007) presses and articulates this understanding further in a challenging view: “while the net has led to an unforeseen extension of the media public and to an unprecedented thickening of communication networks, the contributions of intellectuals lose power to create a focus. Therefore, use of the Internet has both extended and fragmented communication connections” (Bruns, 2007).

2.4.2 The digital public sphere

Habermas’ classic theory of the public sphere appeared to be an essential concept in political discussion in the western context. However, it has recently received some criticism, which argues that the classic public sphere theory is incompatible with the

increasing development of the Internet and other communicative technologies. It requires an expanded notion of the public sphere with the intention to include practices and relationships arising from the horizons of individuals' social experiences (Negt & Kluge, 1995).

The concept of the public sphere is then revitalized as a theoretical background for some studies on digital networks and citizen participation such as eParticipation (Roberts, 2009; Scammell, 2000; Sanford, 2012). Many scholars have recently vigorously studied mass media, especially the Internet, with the intention to explore its potential to create ideal speech situations and to contribute to the public sphere (Habermas, 1989). Drezner (2005) contended that the political system plays a certain role in the Internet's impact on politics. Based on this understanding, scholars generally have proposed two directions that the multiplication of mass media could probably leads to: one is an intensification of public connection, as people may have become more and more skilful at taking advantages of their media consumptions to suit their everyday habits and information needs; the other is the fragmentation of the public sphere that can no longer get connected sufficiently to form a shared public world (Gitlin, 1998).

A small group of scholars, however, have expressed their doubts about the question of whether online deliberation can achieve an Habermasian ideal public sphere (Bimber, 2003; Neuman et al., 2009; Brants, 2005; Bruns 2007; Coleman & Blumler 2009; Dahlberg, 2004; Hindman, 2009; Sey & Castells 2004; Wright & Street 2007). Brants (2005) compares the Internet to the medicine for democracy "in a midlife crisis", thus indicating its possible curative effect for citizenship development. Dahlberg (2004) works out a set of normative conditions for an ideal public sphere such as reflexivity, formal inclusion and autonomy, which means that the establishment of the public sphere is conditioned on certain factors. Three aspects of concerns have been expressed by scholars. The first is the concern about a "digital divide" problem, which is whether a broad array of citizens can be included in rational deliberation in the mass media. The reality is that large numbers of citizens may be excluded from information nets due to their lack of access to computers, services providers,

or even telephones (Bennett, 2000). Van Dijk (2005) argues that the digital divide in those advanced high-tech societies is still widening and deepening. The research finds that the inequalities also appear in the type of activities that people perform online and could translate into unequal patterns of political involvement offline (Di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006). Norris (2001) argues that:

... the rise of the virtual political system seems most likely to facilitate further knowledge, interest, and activism of those who are already most predisposed toward civic engagement, reinforcing patterns of political participation (Norris, 2001, p.228).

The second concern is how to evaluate the influence of online discussion critically. Some prominent bloggers have claimed that the Internet is supposed to provide ordinary citizens with chances to develop their ability to set the news agenda for other types of media (Armstrong & Zuniga, 2006). For instance, Benkler (2006) argues in a Pew study that the blogging has the ability to come up with important news topics, to filter for the best content and ultimately to shape the broader media agenda and what they are doing is just like journalism (Benkler, 2006). However, a recent enormous and systematic analysis by Leskovec, Backstrom, and Kleinberg (2009) shows that it is the news media that first raises certain significant political issues and news stories and then gradually migrate to blogs, rather it is not the case that the agenda set on the blogs influences the news media. Other scholars express doubts about the ability of bloggers, as it turns out that only one blog in ten discusses political and social issues on a regular basis, while approximately 90 thousand new blogs are estimated to be posted every day (Technorati, 2010). The new blog report released by Technorati (2013) shows that blogs were found to be the third most influential source for customers making their purchasing decisions. Benkler (2006) also stated his concern that the majority of online users tend to view these technologies as personal means for daily expression. The third concern is the absence of a coercive external constraint on online open discussion (Neuman et al., 2009). There are different policies of mass media in different countries and contexts. Wright and Street (2007) contend that political choices related to the format and operation of online discussion could

greatly affect the possibility of the online public sphere. For instance, in some authoritarian states, the internet is patrolled by authorities, and some groups of people are afraid to express certain opinions or some of their statements will be prohibited from posting in the Internet (Deiber et al., 2008). However, scholars also expressed their concerns on the potential structural problems of democratic states. For example, Miller (2002) argues that the media system in capitalism states is drawing citizens into consumers of entertainment media programs, which has made citizens governed and disciplined.

In spite of those worries among scholars, some studies have found optimistic evidence for the extension of the public sphere through mass media. They examined online discussion empirically using the main standards that Habermas has configured in his ideal type of the public sphere, such as whether online discussion is free and open to all, whether it is rational, whether it is reciprocal (Wu, 2012) and found that participants could enter into rational–critical debates in spaces such as virtual communities, individualistic political websites, and forums of informal public interaction (Dahlberg, 2001a). For instance, Jenkins (2006) presents rich empirical evidence about what people are actively doing with mass media and media texts such as how Harry Potter fans demonstrate their critical agency and creativity by rewriting the stories.

In his later work, Habermas (1996) also acknowledged that new technical means have the potential to make such deliberation possible, and further developed the model of the public sphere:

...Moreover, the public sphere is differentiated into levels according to the density of communication, organizational complexity, and range--from the episodic publics found in taverns, coffee houses, or on the streets; through the occasional or "arranged" publics of particular presentations and events, such as theatre performances, rock concerts, party assemblies, or church congresses; up to the abstract public sphere of isolated readers, listeners, and viewers scattered across large geographic areas, or even around the globe, and brought together only through the mass media (p. 374)

For the purpose in this research, the notions of the abstract public sphere is of particular

interest, because it seems to indicate that interaction with popular culture, mass media and everyday life might have democratic effects among citizens. In this sense, the cultural public sphere constituted on the mass media can serve as a training ground that cultivates citizens, preparing them for civic participation and political engagement.

Scholars have argued that a networked global public sphere is indeed emerging through social media (Castells, 2008; Knox, 2013; Mazali, 2011). For instance, Mazali (2011) argues that every single person or groups in the emerging cultural context have developed their own way towards expression and participation, which thereafter is on the way to generate a new public sphere. There emerges a perspective of an aesthetic public sphere which aims to describe this digital public sphere online and highlight its connection with the political public sphere (Alexander, 2006; Alexander & Smith, 2003; Jacobs, 2007, 2012; Jones, 2007; Roberge, 2011). To be specific, it refers to the kind of public spheres formed around aesthetic experiences beyond theoretical revisions of Habermas' classic model. In this process, common aesthetic experiences under mass media work as channels through which one connects to others socially as well as meditates on civic significance in everyday civic life (Jacobs, 2007). While cultural citizenship embodies a tendency towards being optimistic about everyday citizenship, the precondition of an aesthetic public sphere further considers ways in which every day experiences are connected with civic implications or fail to connect with the formal public sphere.

Online deliberation is plausible in the context of western democracies where state interference in online political discussion does not generally occur (Fung, 2002), and this can also be observed in some less developed countries. For example, Dolby's (2006) research in the African context argues that people's everyday engagement with popular culture should be treated as a central and important component in understanding how the emergent public spaces and citizenship practices have been developing in Africa's present situation and in its future. Similarly, despite the explicit media censorship of political issues, Malaysia.Net operates effectively, and a large proportion of Malaysian residents are keen to discuss public issues in a relatively free environment (Dahlberg, 2010).

When discussing the digital public sphere in China, a major obstacle for truly open and free discussion is also observed. Fung (2002) observes that the central government of China employs “professional writers” to insert the state voice in all corners of internet chat rooms in Hong Kong and help create a bottom-up participatory control. In addition, Zhang and the colleagues (2013) argue that social media in China is constrained from serving as an effective public sphere; rather the public sphere is limited and dominated by traditional media actors. Therefore, the extent of the relevance of the concept of a public sphere in the Chinese context, or whether the concept can be adopted to analyse China’s social conditions, has been a topic of continuous discussion (Tai, 2006).

2.5 Main area of cultural citizenship: examination of mass media’s democratic implications

It is argued that the fundamental departure point of cultural citizenship is to understand the internal nature of culture (Roberge, 2011). To press research on cultural citizenship further in this study, my literature review is conducted on popular culture and mass media research with the intention to provide readers with a clearer understanding of cultural citizenship. In addition, it leads to rich promising empirical findings in this section which mainly concentrate on young people’s experience with popular culture and mass media.

2.5.1 Three perspectives of popular culture

Popular culture is a complicated term. It mainly refers to the newly emerged and widely accepted culture in a community, district or nation. Popular culture is considered as an essential part in the process through which people try to construct meanings, understanding and identities throughout the world (Dolby, 2003; Grossberg, 1989; Hall, 1981). The literature generally reveals three representative opinions of popular culture as to its implications for citizenship.

There is a general familiarity with arguments which mainly focus on popular culture’s passive side. Popular culture is accused of contaminating young people because it usually

contains vulgar, irrational and rebellious information. The representative of this aspect is the Frankfurt School. To them, popular culture or mass culture in their words has lost the creative aspect of arts, showing tendencies towards commercialization and commodity fetishism (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2001). They argue that mass culture cannot be called arts in a real sense, but it is just a way for ordinary people to entertain themselves and to be consumers. As Clement Greenberg (1939)⁵ pointed out, the relation between mass culture and high culture is not like that of leaf and branch, but rather the caterpillar and leaf. In other words, mass culture just extracts nutrition and leaves without giving back. In addition, it tends to drive people away from high culture. With the help of mass media, popular culture imposes itself into people's lives, and never gives them the choice of whether to accept or not.

Another view of mass culture argues that mass culture originates from ordinary people; therefore, it expresses the voices of people and acts as a tool for fighting against the upper class.⁶ For instance, the Birmingham School underwent a thorough break away from former passive ideas of mass culture. They refused to view mass culture as inferior or opposite to elite culture and argued for reflection on the current situation through cultural research. As the most influential scholar of the Birmingham School, Stuart Hall (1981) contended that mass culture is an area representing the interests of ordinary people, where they can win power and rights from the dominant culture (Hall, 1981). Van Zoonen (2005) also argues that popular culture can help citizens' everyday lives get connected with politics, and there are the possibilities of increasing civic knowledge and promoting civic participation through the arenas of political-themed popular music, soaps and dramas. Hall (1981) further challenged the idea of the "passive culture consumer" in mass culture, and pointed out the existence of semiotics, which means that cultural consumers can in fact actively decode information from mass media through a complex thinking process. Similarly, Scott et al. (2011) contends that popular culture could provide young people

⁵ See also "The Avant-Grade and Kitsch" by Clement Greenberg (1939), Retrieved from <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR2/greenburg.pdf>. Accessed 15th December, 2014.

⁶ This perspective is well represented in the Journal of *Popular Culture*, published by the Centre for Popular Culture Studies at Bowling Green State University. See Dolby (2003) for discussion.

with a range of salient ways of expressing and making sense of their relationship to politics. Jones (2006, p.367) provides the similar reason that entertainment media and popular culture are probably in a position to offer more vivid narratives than serious news for citizens' understanding of political issues.

A third position has been further proposed to understand popular culture, which is less familiar but more useful with relevance to my research. Its main argumentation is that popular culture is understood as a site of struggle as well as a place for the negotiation of race, gender, nation, and other identities issues (Dolby, 2006; Hall, 1981). As scholars such as Stuart Hall (1973) and Cameron McCarthy (1998) have argued, people do not consume popular culture with a mindless and passive attitude, but they employ innovative ways to express, as popular culture is an important arena for public debate. Furthermore, Willis (1990) argues that the high culture is creating exclusion more than inclusion among young people, rather the creativity embodied in popular culture in everyday life has provided a forum for young people for expressing something about their actual cultural significance, and it should call attention from educational researchers. For example, Barnett (2004) discovers that a popular South African educational broadcasting, Yizo Yizo is greatly employed by people as a forum for public discourse discussion, communication, subject-formation and transnational struggles for recognition in this newly democratic nation. Therefore, it could be argued that popular culture has projected its important implications for the public spaces and different social fabric units in society and it has inserted profound influence on young people by affecting them how to conceptualize and enact their rights and responsibilities as citizens (Dolby, 2003). In this regard, the last strand of mass culture is more closely connected to the discussion of cultural citizenship in this research.

2.5.2 Two perspectives of mass media

Modern mass media is an important means through which popular culture can be transmitted. Print media such as newspapers, magazines and books are traditional forms of mass media, but the late 20th and early 21st centuries have witnessed the soaring

development of electronic media: broadcasting, TV, movies, the Internet and etc. Although we have different terms through the literature for describing technological changes, such as “online” (Davis, 2005), “digital media” (Hindman, 2009), “network” (Castells, 2008), and “(world wide) web” (Berners-Lee, 1999), scholars tend to rely mainly on the classic term of “the Internet”, which dates to the 1970s, thus the term of “the Internet” is also used in this study to refer to new mass media.

Mass media nowadays has been exerting overwhelming influence on people’s personal values, identity and beliefs and behaviours. McLuhan (1967) once asserted that mass media can change the way people think. By coining the famous saying that “The medium is the Message”, he took the mass media as the most important shaper of culture. Gerbner et al. (1980) summarized it as the cultivation theory, which means that a cumulative effect begins to actually shape a person’s views of social reality and situation through long- term interaction with mass media.

When discussing the prevailing influence of mass media in society, it is the new mass media that attributes more to this topic. Giddens (1991) argues that there is a notable turning away from public life into the sites of online networks, gaming and entertainment environments, and consumer pursuits. The occurrence of political activities is often related to lifestyle concerns that are observed outside of the realm of the government (Bennett, 2008). Pearce (2009) explained that, compared with traditional mass media, the media such as television and the Internet have made people into a more active audience who have the opportunity to produce their own discussion topics, and thus the possibility to conduct citizenship meditation in daily life is increased (Pearce, 2009, p.623-627). In addition, young people in particular are the main consumers as well as the producers of popular culture (Lipsitz et al., 2004), as the Internet is more successful in attracting young people to politics (Eden & Roker, 2002; Norris, 2001; Zukin, et al., 2006). Such a notion leads us to explore the civic implications of mass media, especially the Internet, in young people’s daily experiences.

The following question that then needs to be explored is how to evaluate mass media's role critically. In other words, do mass media exert positive or negative influence on young people's perceptions of civic knowledge and their civic participation? The answer I believe is: it depends. Aronson and Pratkanis (1992) believe that the influence of mass media was sometimes subtle and unintended, but really worked, meaning that whether the changes are carried out consciously or unconsciously, positively or negatively, people's thoughts and behaviours will involuntarily be influenced by mass media. Therefore, in line with the rapid growth of mass media, on the one hand, there are many scholars who argued for its positive influence for civic understanding and civic practices, while on the other hand, sceptics worried about mass media's negative influence on democracy.

In section 2.2.4, the configuration of cultural citizenship in this study has some discussion about the civic role of mass media. Observers agreed that such unprecedented media as television, the Internet and social networks such as blogs are envisioned to potentially enhance citizenship and democracy (Barlow, 2008; Coleman, 2004). For instance, Jenkins (2006) pointed out that watching television which exposes viewers to many genres and their hybrids of popular culture can serve as a key vehicle for meaning communication (Jenkins, 2006). In Newcomb's opinion, television is just like a cultural forum which offers a site where people could think about values and social visions embedded in the programs in critical and different ways (Newcomb & Hirsch, 2000). As to the Internet, it breaks down barriers between private networks and formal organizations operating in the public sphere (Bennett et al., 2008). By doing so, it has changed the traditional communicative way of "one way conversation" (Postman, 1986) into "two ways" communication with participants as both information producers and consumers. The traditional notions of formal engagement are challenged by different forms of citizenship expressed through new media such as Twitter and Face book (Bennett, 2008). Deuze (2006) summarizes three new modes of social engagement through the context of mass media, which are "participation, remediation and bricolage" (Deuze, 2006). First, individuals become "active subjects" when they are processing information and meaning (participation); Second, at the same time, citizens will "modify, manipulate and thus reform consensual ways of understanding

reality” (remediation); and third, individuals “assemble own particular versions of such reality” (bricolage) (Deuze, 2006, p. 66).

On the contrary, there always exist dissenting voices in evaluating a particular thing. Putnam’s famous *Bowling Alone* thesis (2000) has established the negative image of television that has influenced other scholars. Moreover, section 2.4.2 has discussed scholars’ general concerns towards the Internet around its problems such as the “digital divide”, evaluation and its absence of a coercive external constraint. Sceptics dispute the democratic potential of the Internet by pointing out how optimistic evaluations can be unrealistic and deceiving (Dahlberg, 2001; Hill & Hughes, 1998; Papacharissi, 2004). Papacharissi (2004) argues that whether the internet-based technologies would create a new public sphere beyond the current political culture needs further consideration. Scholars also expressed their worries that there may be ways in which the Internet promotes participation, but also undermines civic participation (Bennett, 2008).

2.5.3 Hopeful empirical research on active citizenship and mass media

Based on the rational of cultural citizenship and mass media’s civic implications, relevant empirical research has been conducted in different contexts to analyse the possibility of active citizenship through mass media. This has resulted in some promising empirical findings.

As to civic participation, most research in the western context so far has concentrated on traditional civic practices. On the whole, research on mass media’s connection with political participation, for example voting in US presidential elections, is fruitful. Jennings and Zeitner (2003) find that Internet use is positively related with political involvement using a panel study comparing the same citizens in 1982 and 1997. Boulianne (2009) also justified that the relationship between the consumption of online news and political participation is more statistically and substantively significant (Boulianne, 2009).

At the same time, there are some scholars arguing that young people are more interested in

lifestyle politics and citizen-directed advocacy than traditional institutionalized forms of participation (Bennett, 1998). Smith has suggested the implications of mass media is harder to scale on older people, while young people can be easily targeted in schools and systematically analysed (Smith et al., 2005), indicating that this kind of research is specially promising in the group of young people. For instance, Burgess and his fellow researchers (2006) employed case study research to explore the significance of cultural citizenship and its potential contribution to new forms of civic involvements in the public sphere. They found that the online photo sharing site of Flickr acts as an online space where individual users can upload, share and communicate, and the unintended consequences are that people with the same interests tend to get together for further communication. In this regard, this social network is like a social glue, connecting people together (Burgess et al., 2006).

Di Gennaro and Dutton (2006) conducted a survey based on the data collected from the Oxford Internet Survey and indicated that internet usage impacts upon the information seeking behaviours of younger groups, because they use the Internet most and are the most likely to use the Internet to search for social and political information. Coleman (2008) suggests that young people in the UK feel that they can have more authentic experiences in some informal and edgier political sites and even in entertainment media and games. Benkler (2006) supports mass media's positive role in citizenship among young people by using the example of J.K. Rowling's novels of the Harry Potter character's influence on younger generations. Similarly, Van Zoonen (2007) examines people's consumption of politics-themed movies and TV series and finds that their comments on these stories always touch on real-life politics and reflect their thoughts about politics.

Besides research on the general correlation between mass media and active citizenship, scholars also study mass media to understand the relationship of specific aspects to citizenship. A survey conducted in Belgium with the sample of 6330 people of 13 years old indicates that internet usage does not have an apparent effect on the likelihood of participating in the public sphere (Quintelier & Vissers, 2007). However, it revealed that

certain online activities among the sample, such as “chatting with unknown people, blogging and contributing messages to discussion groups, purchasing or selling things, following the news, and forwarding political emails affect the political involvement of youth in a positive way” (Quintelier & Vissers, 2007, p.424). This therefore infers that the contents of online activities matter in people’s civic engagement (De Vreese, 2007; Jung et al., 2001; Norris, 1996).

In line with this understanding, Cohen and Kahne (2012) proposed two categories of online activities: politically driven online participation and interest-driven activities. Those activities which enable people to pursue interest hobbies, popular culture, games and sports are included in the group of interest- driven online participation (Ito et al., 2009). Cohen and Kahne (2012) continue to propose that interest driven online participation seems to have no relation with political and civic engagement, for it just enables people to socialize as well as form and maintain relationships by the Internet. Rather, Salaway and Caruso (2008) argues that young internet users have stated that they do use social networks to stay connected with friends and form new friendship, and it will further enhance their civic and social participation. Valenzuela (2009) continues to explore the relationship between Facebook usage and student life satisfaction, trust and participation, showing that friendship driven online activities through Facebook are positively related with civic participation. However, whether the relation is strong or small, it needs further identification. In addition, an interesting result from a survey conducted between youths aged 12 and 17 in Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei and Tokyo in 2007 shows that although entertainment related activities are the most popular forms of Internet use, the Internet may still foster citizenship among Asian youth (Lin et al., 2010). Overall, these above studies infer that different types of online activities need to be examined for their real implications for citizenship.

However, further research on political participation has found that although a wide array of non-traditional forms of online participation (e.g. social movements, activist networks, etc.) have appeared, they have not definitely resulted in a broader societal base of participation

but only in a broader range of activities among those who are already active (Gabriel & Moßner, 2002; Leighley, 1995; Topf, 1995). In addition, although those who are already active online have come to appreciate that new technologies can provide a revolutionary way for views expression and political participation process (Gabriel & Moßner, 2002), the pattern of offline participation would always remain essentially unchanged (Fuchs, 2003), thus indicating the need to explore the relationship between online civic participation with offline participation as well as mediating factors in real society.

W. Russell Neuman (1998) provides some discussion about the principle of “conditional effects” of mass media, which indicates that mass media’s capacities for influencing people’s interactivity, diversity and information abundance may be transformative according to different social conditions, cultural tradition and strata of society. The reason may be that people need certain resources to be able to participate (Albrecht, 2006). Among these contributing factors are social resources such as economic capital, education and acquaintance with the political field (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Verba et al., 1995). Many empirical findings supported the argument that certain characteristics of a social context as well as individual characteristics could exert different influence on the real effects of mass media, thus indicating that the real implications of the media for offline activities is selective (Kazee, 1981; Lowery & DeFleur, 1988; Petersen & Thurstone, 1933).

The two preconditions for cultural citizenship discussed in sections of 2.3 and 2.4 have suggested the importance of social contexts for the achievement of mass media’s civic role. In addition, a person’s ability to deal with the information provided by mass media could account for a great deal in real life. For instance, several studies in political communication have pointed out that people’s interest in politics serves as a powerful indicator for their actual participation (Chaffee et al., 1994). Specifically, the Internet is likely to have much more direct effects among those citizens with greater motivation and interest to seek their preferred political information or to engage in communication about public affairs than those who are relatively disinterested in politics or unmotivated for public life. Time and

attention are of particular relevance to the Internet. Dahlberg found in his analysis that the level of engagement and the amount of attention that participants are willing to invest in deliberation is also a relevant factor for civic participation (Dahlberg, 2001a). This has directed me to consider the importance of investigating these factors through research in this particular context in China.

To conclude, both quantitative research and qualitative research on mass media has been reviewed to understand implications for active citizenship. The findings generally supported the argument that mass media provides the possibility of cultural citizenship, as it has potential for civic meditation and is positively related with civic participation. In addition, it also indicates that consideration should be given to the specific conditions of participation history and involvement in the public sphere as experienced by groups of people in their national context, as well as individual's engagements with mass media.

2.6 Summary of this chapter

The literature review of cultural citizenship in the western context has been conducted in this chapter with the aim of providing a conceptual framework for exploring the potential of cultural citizenship.

It began with a review of different approaches to the notion of cultural citizenship, which were classified according to their strands in defining the term 1) from political theories, 2) from sociology and 3) from cultural studies. It ended with the understanding from this research that cultural citizenship is an active process where interaction with mass media provides connection between people's daily lives and the public sphere, thus these kinds of practices are also part of civic experiences in the real sense.

Two prerequisites were proposed for the potential of cultural citizenship. The first one is participation, in the sense of active. I have adopted a historical perspective to examine "participation" in the notion of "citizenship", and it showed participation is inherent in citizenship understanding in the western context. What's more, active citizenship is also

encouraged in citizenship education in most countries. As to the second precondition, the public sphere has extended to online deliberation according to Habermas' standards, which means the digital public sphere exists as a site for rational deliberation and discussion. The achievement of cultural citizenship in the western context is mainly theoretically based on participation in citizenship as well as active citizenship in education and the aesthetic public sphere of civil society. In this regard, I have developed preconditions for cultural citizenship as a conceptual device to identify whether a given society is qualified for cultural citizenship, whether active participation have been historically recognized by the state as well as educational institutions and how the public sphere is developed. Accordingly, these preconditions are now further reviewed in the Chinese context to predict the possibilities of cultural citizenship in China in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three Exploration of the preconditions for cultural citizenship in the Chinese context

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two provided an examination of cultural citizenship in the western context including its notion, preconditions, and its main displaying area of mass media, which has provided clues to conduct cultural citizenship research in other contexts. The purpose of Chapter Three is to correspondingly examine these above aspects related to cultural citizenship in the Chinese context. By doing so, it intends to theoretically examine and explore the potential of cultural citizenship in China

It is divided into three main sections. In the first of these sections, two previously proposed preconditions for cultural citizenship are correspondingly examined in the Chinese context. This includes, firstly, the historical development of citizenship and current practices of citizenship education in Chinese universities with the intention to examine “participation”. Secondly, it includes consideration of mainstream culture and media censorship with the intention to examine the quality of “the public sphere” in China. In this regard, I attempt to reveal how citizenship is promoted in Chinese educational and national policy frameworks. In the second section, mass media research is reviewed examining its civic implications among Chinese university students with the intention to provide readers with a clear idea of how current relevant research has been generally undertaken in Mainland China. Finally, the third section makes some efforts to identify existing studies relating to cultural citizenship in the Chinese context, which further justifies the need to look beyond traditional citizenship and search for cultural citizenship in a wider picture.

3.2 Exploring the preconditions for cultural citizenship in China (1): civic participation or not?

This section aims to explore the notion of “participation” in the historical development of

citizenship and contemporary citizenship education practices in China, referring to the importance of participation for the enactment of cultural citizenship as indicated in the literature review in section 2.3 of Chapter Two.

3.2.1 An analysis of the historical development of citizenship in the Chinese context

In ancient China

Strictly speaking, we don't have a history of citizenship in ancient China (Xu, 2013; Yu, 2011). An underlying reason could be that the extremely politically-centralized system in Chinese feudal society was unable to incubate those essential elements of citizenship in the western context such as democracy, freedom and individual rights (Gao, 1997, p.84).

The politically centralized system was established in the Qin Dynasty (秦朝) in 221BC and lasted until the late Qing Dynasty (清朝) at the beginning of the 20th century. During these more than 2000 years of feudal society, emperors, who can succeed to their thrones for generations, exerted supreme power in deciding everything nationwide. People were attached strictly not only to the monarch but also to the family according to the Confucian rule of “son-to-father attachment, wife-to-husband attachment”.⁷ They were called “subjects of the feudal rule” (Chenmin in Chinese) characterized with absolute obedience and subordination (Lu, 2009; Li, 2013). It is argued that people in ancient China are generally those who are lacking or losing the political consciousness of being an individual subject (Liu & Han, 2004, p.185).

In addition, laws were made by the monarch with the intention to keep people steadily under control, and all the ordinary people could do was to passively accept this (Wang & Liao, 1998). This political tradition has exerted a negative influence in later Chinese history. Even most people today only care about how to obey the law prescribed by the

⁷ It is proposed by the orthodox ideology of Confucianism in ancient China, emphasizing the fulfilment of order and obligation prescribed in feudal hierarchy social relations. To be specific, sons should show absolute obedience to fathers, and wife should show absolute obedience to husbands.

state, but do not know how to protect their own rights (Dong & Shi, 1998).

Late Qing Dynasty and early Republican period

The origin of citizenship and citizenship education in China can be traced back to the late 19th century (Li, 2006). The Qing Dynasty came into huge crisis in the late 19th century. Domestically, massive peasant rebellions greatly rocked the ruling base of the Qing Dynasty, and its supporting ideology of the Confucian social order started to collapse. Internationally, foreign imperialism launched wars of aggression towards China, and China was almost divided up by foreign imperialism by the end of 19th century. The invasion further eroded the dynastic state and brought for Chinese scholars challenging alternatives to the existing orthodox Confucian ideology and imperial rules (Rogaski, 2004).

The notion of “citizen” was not found in the Chinese context until the late Qing Dynasty. Facing the national crisis at that time, discussion of citizenship became a central focus among the newly emerging bourgeoisie and intellectuals. They rallied for the transformation of the old feudal society and began to regard developing citizenship as a kind of ethnic-political action, which could help transcend the perceived limitations in the existing feudal political system (Culp, 2007). Liang Tingnan⁸ (cited in Chen, 2004) first introduced the notion of “citizen” to China, and it is the earliest record which can be found in Chinese history about citizenship. Inspired by the “citizen” in the western context, intellectuals believed that a citizen should be active in political participation. For instance, Yan⁹ (cited in Ding, 1999) argued that being an active citizen is the key to China’s prosperity. Kang¹⁰ (cited in Zhang & Wang, 1960) expressed the same idea that the problem in China is that the ruling class had exerted extreme control over people, and the only way to save China would be to encourage active participation in local governments. Another proposed quality for a citizen is the sense of rights, which was viewed as the

⁸ Liang mentioned the notion of “citizen” in his book of *“The United States Said”* in 1880s when introducing the electoral and democratic system in the United States.

⁹ Fu Yan is one of the representative intellectuals in late Qing Dynasty, who emphasized the importance of active participation in his book ‘Yuanqiang [Original Strength]’.

¹⁰ Youwei Kang is one of the representative intellectuals in late Qing Dynasty, and he expressed his thoughts in his book ‘Gonmin Zizhi Pian [Citizen Autonomy]’.

fundamental difference from the notion of “Chenmin”. Liang (1989) emphasized that everyone is born with rights, and there should be balance between rights and responsibility for a citizen. Furthermore, they also proposed pursuits for freedom, equality and law. For instance, Liang mentioned that citizens are possessed with freedom to participate in national affairs (Liang, 1989). Liang (1989) later in 1902 systematically summarized the essential qualities for a citizen in his “*Talk of New Citizens*” (translated from Chinese), which includes political capabilities, rights, public morality, participation freedom, equality and democracy (cited in Du, 2006). It is indicated that citizenship understanding at that time in China began to get connected with western civic thoughts, and attempts were made to underpin a new relationship between individuals, society and the nation (Ao, 2013).

In 1911, the Xinhai revolution led by Sun Yat-sen finally put the long-lasting feudal system to an end, and the bourgeois revolutionaries established a new republican government. The first constitution “*Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China*” was enacted in 1912, which explicitly underwrites that the sovereignty of the Republic of China belongs to all national people. Thus civic republicanism regarded the “citizen” as an idealized form of a modern person who could actively participate in the creation of a strong and wealthy nation in the modern world (Fogel, 1997). In addition, republicanism also advocated patriotism and caring for the public. For instance, Sun Yat-sen critiqued the Chinese feudal situation thus:

Foreign observers say that the Chinese are like a sheet of loose sand. Why? Simply because our people have only shown loyalty to families and clan, but not to the nation—there has been no nationalism (Sun, 1927).

Based on these new thoughts, Chinese modern civic education began to sprout. Cai Yuanpei, the educational minister of the Republican government, further argued that the essence of civic morality for a citizen of the Republic is freedom, equality and fraternity such as was revealed by the French Revolution (Gong, 2003), and Cai proposed a comprehensive framework of education for all people which is specifically composed of five elements: which is military-citizen education; practical education such as setting up

day-schools and public libraries; civic morality; cosmopolitanism and aesthetic education for encouraging public-spirited, hardworking and disciplined citizens (Bailey, 1990). Cai also pointed out that citizens should be fostered to develop spirits such as patriotism and contribution to society, and his notion of citizen was later incorporated into the educational system in the Republic of China (Li, 2006).

However, the enlightenment of civic consciousness ceased due to severe attacks from the long and ingrained feudalism forces in the early 20th century, and the rooted consciousness of “Chenmin” among the Chinese was not transformed dramatically (Liu, 1989). In addition, due to the unstable political and social situation during the 1937 Anti-Japanese War and then the 1946 Domestic War, this notion of citizenship did not develop further, and its articulated civic rights were not realized in the real sense. Referring to the development of participation in the western context in Chapter Two, citizenship originated from ancient Greece, and developed through centuries to a mature state. However, the imported ideology of civic consciousness is unlikely to take shape immediately within a few years in China (Liu, 1991).

1949 -1978

The Chinese Communist Party (CPC) established the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, which marks a most important turning point in Chinese history. Communist leaders later promoted socialist transformations in sectors of agriculture, industry and commerce in order to clear out remnants of feudalism and bourgeois power, and established a socialist country in 1956. As a newly established communist country in the world at that time, China leaned to the Soviet Union, employed Leninist and Marxist ideology and established highly centralized economic, political and public systems, making itself different from western democratic counties (Wan, 2004).

The notion of “citizen” officially appeared again in an official document in 1952, and then the new 1954 Chinese constitution made a clear provision of a citizen’s status: All those

who possess Chinese nationality are recognized as citizens of China.¹¹ Each individual's rights and responsibilities are also specified by the 1954 Constitution. It was the first time that the legal understanding of citizenship had been underpinned by law in the New China (Wan, 2004).

However, the concept of "citizen" was rarely used in reality and citizens' rights were not fully guaranteed in the early period of the New China. The idea of citizen has been conspicuously dormant within the lexicon of CPC discourses since 1949 (Keane, 2001). Class struggle was regarded as the principle theme of social conflict at that time. The term "citizen" was replaced by "people", and its opposite is "enemy" in the political context. For instance, everything related with bourgeois influence was viewed as in opposition to "people" and was fiercely attacked under the system of radical socialism of that time. Citizens' equal rights did not emphasize individuals' rights, but it placed emphasis on the country, the society and people's collective rights (Shi, 2003). To be specific, people were asked more to show absolute obedience to the country, and individual rights were viewed as poisons to the socialist highest goal of class struggle and collectivism. In this regard, it is shown that the notion of civic rights at that time just became an illusion, as the term of "citizen" was only rigidly depicted in formal, legal and propagandistic official documents, but was not at all fused into people's daily lives (Tang, 1986).

As the concept of "citizen" did not actually enter realms of social life, it is argued that citizenship education was absent at that time (Wan, 2004). China has been regarded as a propaganda state for its indoctrination and brain washing in western scholarship (Yang, 2002). Citizenship education was equated with political education (Zhong, 2004), as its learning contents were mainly of Marxism-Leninism, and its intended teaching aim was to disseminate the government policies and CPC values into all students (Schurmann, 1968; Walder, 1986). Specifically, students were fully expected to foster their firm faith in the Party and communism, and their sense of rights and independence was greatly ignored.

¹¹ The first session of the first National People's Congress of China (NPCC), *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Diyi bu Xianfa* [The first Constitution of PRC], 20 September 1954. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2004-02/18/content_1320274.htm. Accessed 8 December 2015

1978—late 20th century

The 1978 Reform and Open up Policy is another important turning point in Chinese history which marked the beginning of a new age of ideological development (Lee & Ho, 2006). The second-generation leadership, represented by Deng Xiaoping, started to commence new political and economic policies. In the Third Session of the Eleventh Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (CCPCC) in 1978, Deng Xiaoping announced the decision to abandon class struggle in political life, and appealed for a focus on economic development in the Party's domestic affairs. Later in 1992, Deng Xiaoping clearly pointed out that socialist countries can also employ market economy practices in order to achieve economic development. Economic control from the CPC was reduced, and the market economy was greatly relied on by the state to distribute resources (Zhang, 2000). China's market economic system was completely established by 1994. In addition, the emergence of the intellectual expression is observed in this period (Franklin, 1989).

The new dynamics of civic life tended to emerge in the post-Mao Reforms during the 1980s. The concept of "citizen" was pointed up again by the government, first in the Constitution and then extended to social life. The democratization process in political operation and economic activities has brought a marked change to people's ideas and value systems. It argues that people's understanding of citizenship, civic rights, obligations and responsibilities as a citizen has been increased (Wan, 2004). For instance, individuals' interests were recognized. People put aside the traditional value that fame and fortune is synonymous with "evil", and publicly tried to pursue personal benefits. A revisit to Marxism shows that socialism is never constrained within collectivism, as Marx once clearly pointed out: in any case, a person can always pursue their interests from their own standing points.¹² Thus new concepts relating to market economy such as competition, innovation, equality, democracy and legalization have been formed and spread (Gao et al., 1988). Scholars summarized the following trends among people during this period: "value orientation from collectivism to individualism, value pursuits from moral orientation to

¹² Cited from *the Complete Collection of Marx and Engels 3rd volume*, p. 514, published in Chinese, Beijing: People's Publishing House.

interest orientation, value standards from one centrality to diversity” (Li & Chang, 2006).

An independent subject, ideological and political education, was established in 1981 across different educational levels in primary education, secondary education and universities with the intention to guide students’ thinking and behaviours as citizens. Its main contents included Marxism-Leninism, Maoism, revolutionary ambition education and communism morality education in the 1980s (Zhu, 2008). In addition, important CPC and state documents, selected editorials and articles in state newspapers were also included (Rosen, 1983). Of great relevance to this research, it argues that the university plays a critical role in equipping students with citizen competencies which could flourish in modern states (Fallis, 2007). The following research focus is thus placed on citizenship education in Chinese universities.

The Reform Notice was released in 1985 with the intention to guide university students in understanding different social ideologies after the 1978 Reform and Open policy.¹³ It emphasized that the teaching content of ideological and political education was about educating students to learn Chinese revolutionary history about how the CPC has led the Chinese people stepping onto the socialism road, and motivating them to foster a spirit of sacrifice for the socialism cause. In addition, the reform urged university students to study Marxist classics in depth when they feel confused. The reform also pointed out the need to improve teaching methods from indoctrination to heuristic teaching using open class discussion and social practice opportunities. Although the development of teaching methods was praised (Ao, 2013), teaching contents were still strictly confined within the socialism domain. In 1986, the CPC promoted the movement of “developing socialist spiritual civilization”, and the major elements of “citizen” were further framed within four positive virtues of “ambition, morals, education and discipline”.¹⁴ Therefore, it is clear to

13 The Central committee of CPC, *Guanyu gaige xuexiao sixiang pinde he zhengzhi lilun kechen jiaoxue de tongzhi* [*the Reform Notice on the Curriculum of Moral Education and Political Theories in Schools*], 1 August 1985, retrieved from <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64165/68640/68641/4652703.html>, accessed 8 December 2015.

14 These are four virtues proposed by Deng Xiaoping, see “*The selected works of Deng Xiaoping*” pt 3, People Press, 1993, p110.(My translation)

note that although political and revolutionary education was still taught to develop students' socialism behaviours (Price, 1992), the curriculum also underwent explicit ideological shifts, and now also aims to foster essential virtues among students for China's economic development and modernization (Kwong, 1985).

China's interaction with the rest of the world was much more open after the establishment of a socialist market economy in 1994. Besides economic communication, western political ideologies tended to exert more influence on university students. The Tiananmen Square Event on June 4th, 1989 could be seen as a political event, in which university students were asking for more individual rights and active participation in social developments. This event was not expected by communist leaders at that time, and could be viewed as a failure of the 1985 Reform Notice.

The CPC showed its intention to prevent a loss of its public authority as well as to strengthen confidence in socialism (Law, 2007). Later in 1995, another document, *The Reform Advices* was issued.¹⁵ In this policy, "Two classes" (Liangke in Chinese) was first employed to summarize the two existing courses of Marxism theories and moral education, and the significance of studying these "two classes" in universities was highlighted. However, these still mostly consist of moral education, which advocates the "five loves" (love of the home country, people, labour, science and socialism) for the PRC's socialist modernization and the five-isms (patriotism, collectivism, internationalism, communism and historical materialism) for combating "feudalism, capitalism and other decadent ideas" (National people's Congress, 1999, Articles 19, p.24).

The 21st century

The 21st century has witnessed the most overwhelming social changes in China. The development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the acceleration of

¹⁵ The China Educational Committee. Guanyu gaoxiao makesizhuyi lilunke he sixiangpindeke jiaoxue gaige deruogan yijian [*The Reform Advices on the Curriculum of Marxism Theories and Moral Education in Universities*]. Retrieved from <http://www.chinalawedu.com/falvfagui/fg22598/57240.shtml>, Access 24 October 2015.

transportation modes have made China closer with the rest of the world. The tide of globalization has also posed challenges to the traditional conception of citizenship. Referring to the literature in Chapter 2, scholars argue that the significance of nation and border is reduced in the notion of citizenship. There is even the argument that citizenship in the globalizing world increasingly relates to individuals, rather than to the state (Oommen, 1997). The literature in Chapter 2 also exemplified various efforts many scholars have made to cope with the tension brought by globalization. In essence, there is a general argument that flexible citizenship needs to be developed (Morris et al., 2002), and citizenship education needs to help young people actively live and participate in this interdependent world (Osler & Starkey, 2003).

Research on the CPC policies found that there are new requirements for a citizen in response to social transitions. It generally indicates an ideological shift in citizenship understanding moving from the domination of collectivism and socialism to the recognition of personal interests and civic virtues (Chen & Reid, 2002). For instance, civic moral education was emphasized in ideological and political education, and its main contents encompass “patriotism, abiding by the law, courtesy, honesty, solidarity, friendship, diligence, self-improvement, professionalism and dedication” (Ministry of Education, 2004). In 2006, “Socialist Concepts of Honour and Disgrace” was further proposed as a slogan for guiding citizens’ daily behaviours (See Table 3.1).¹⁶ Later, Socialism Core Value systems (including qualities of prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendship) were proposed in the 18th National Conference held in 2012 and further served as good standards to promote morality among citizens (Wang, 2013), which was later incorporated into the textbooks of ideological and political education. The development of ideological and political education in the 21st century in China is depicted in detail below

¹⁶ The former president Hu Jintao proposed Eights Honours and Eight Disgraces in his meeting with committee members of the fourth Session of the tenth CPPCC national Committee on 4 March 2006, Retrieved from <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/49150/49152/4188379.html>, Accessed 8 December 2015. Authorized English translation retrieved from http://www.gov.cn/english/2006-04/05/content_245361.htm Accessed 8 December 2015.

in section 3.2.2.

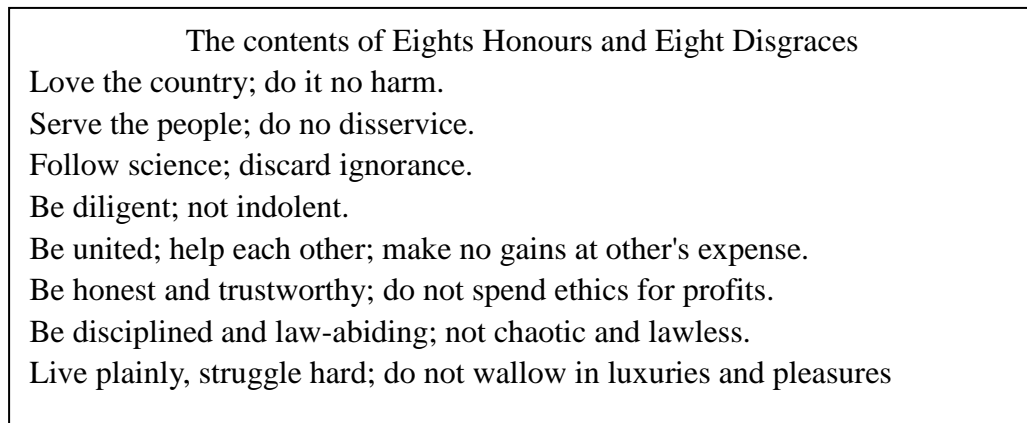


Figure 3. 1: The contents of “socialist concepts Eights Honours and Eight Disgraces” [Translation from Chinese]

To summarize, the notion of “citizenship” was not found in ancient China until the Late Qing Dynasty and the early Republican era. A new bourgeois class at the beginning of the 21st century began to promote civic consciousness of active political participation, rights, freedom, equality and democracy, which is quite similar to that in the western context reviewed in Chapter Two. However, their efforts were subject to failure due to unrest national circumstances at that time.

The notion was articulated again by the CPC after 1949. The understanding of “citizen” in the Chinese context was best illustrated in the development of the curriculum of ideological and political education, and it shows the CPC’s efforts and desires to deal with questions of appropriate conduct and social obligations among university students under a new social compact of market economy. However, emphasis in this curriculum was placed on revolutionary education before the 1980s and political education as well as moral education after that. Although an ideological shift from socialist citizenship to a more accommodative framework could be observed, the CPC plays a dominant role in configuring the basic socialist framework for citizenship in China. In addition, the idea of “participation” is never explicitly articulated in the notion of citizenship. In this sense, it could be argued that the notion of “citizen” still has not yet fully developed in China. Thus, the task of adapting citizenship education to the on-going Chinese social, economic and

political transformations remains unsolved.

3.2.2 Practices of citizenship education in Chinese universities after 2007

The Chinese government has made efforts to reform ideological and political education in universities with the intention to meet the needs for citizenship education among university students. In 2005, *The Further Reform Advices on Ideological and Political Education* was released and it underpinned the curriculum structure in the following decade in Chinese universities: the two core subject areas (Marxism and Moral education) were replaced by four separate courses including: (1) Marxism Theories; (2) Maoism, Deng's Theories and Three Representative theories of Jiang Zeming (Sange daibiao in Chinese)¹⁷; (3) The outline of Chinese Modern History; (4) Moral Cultivation and Law. University students, who were enrolled in September, 2006, began to make use of the newly composed textbooks which aim to cover new elements of social development in the new century (Guo & Ye, 2007).

The 17th National People's Congress of CPC in 2007 first officially pointed out the national task of "strengthening citizen consciousness education and establishing ideas of democracy, the rule of law, freedom, equality as well as justice" (CCP News Website, 2007). The words of "democracy, the rule of law, freedom and justice" indicate that the emphasis of ideological and political education was gradually moving away from moral education to civic education in governmental policies. Since then the term "citizenship education" has oftentimes appeared in policy documents, and the educational ministry and educational scholars have given considerable attention to citizenship education. For instance, the first citizenship education research centre was founded in Zhengzhou University in 2003; meanwhile Beijing Normal University also established a research centre of citizen and moral education. Some efforts have also been made under the framework of ideological and political education to promote civic consciousness. For example, when delivering the

¹⁷ Three Representative theories refer to: the CPC claims to represent the direction of the advanced productive forces of China, to represent the direction of China's advanced culture, to represent the fundamental interests of the majority of the Chinese people. See Yang, D. (2010). Sange Daibiao [Three representatives]. News Website of the Communist Party of China. Retrieved from <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64171/4527680.html>, accessed on 12 December, 2014.

course of “Moral Cultivation and Law”, teachers try to bring citizenship contents into the class such as what a citizen should be, how to become a citizen and what citizenship consciousness is (Tan, 2013). Chinese scholars also proposed the introduction into citizenship teaching of a systematic citizenship curriculum (Liang, 2009); students’ participation mechanisms (Zhao, 2008); the emphasis on civic values (Zhao, 2008); and the establishment of connections between schools, families and society (Li, 2008).

It could be argued that “citizenship” with the connotations of participation, freedom and equality came to be known and experienced by more Chinese university students. It reflected that the task of ideological and political education in government policies not only continues to encompass civic morality education, but encourages students to get involved in public affairs and improve public life (Wang, 2013). Cheung and Pan (2006) also observed the broadening scope of citizenship education and a shift in emphasis in citizenship education policies which is from one strict loyalty to the ruling party to one that can begin to pay attention to students’ personal development, social responsibility and wider community involvement within the State’s allowable political framework. This indicates that ideological and political education aims to embrace more space for individuals and promote particular citizenship rights (Cheng, 2008; Wang & Huang, 2008).

However, China has not yet worked out a systematic curriculum for citizenship education in Chinese universities, and there is no relevant course under the explicit title of “citizenship education” (Ao, 2013). Although the revised ideological and political education in 2005 is expected to have similar educational implications as citizenship education does in the western context, many Chinese scholars have expressed their concerns about the deficiencies of current citizenship education in universities. Three challenges for citizenship education have been mainly articulated by scholars. First, they expressed doubts on the status of current citizenship education. Citizenship education was immersed in contents of ideological and political education, and its independent status was not finally established (Li, 2006). Qu (2011) warns that teaching contents in textbooks did not change too much, as they still mainly concentrated on Marxism and the Party’s relevant

policies with the intention to cultivate students into a particular group of people. Yang (2002) explicitly noted that the position of citizenship education is awkward under new contextual changes. Some other researchers further argued that social values should not be confined within the present government-led static and unitary moral system but rather an independent course of citizenship education, incorporating and recognizing plural value systems and civic values, is needed (Xia & Tang, 2006).

Second, scholars pointed out the absence of “participation” in citizenship education. Although civic consciousness has been articulated in textbooks, it rather stays at the level of speaking out slogans. To be specific, students are only asked to blindly conform to policies without full understanding, and their enthusiasm is not fully aroused (Zhao, 1994). It turns out that ideological and political education mainly depends on theory indoctrination in class, while ignoring the essentiality of civic activities and separating itself from social reality (Ao, 2013). Lee (1996) and Ho (2005) also noted that China’s citizenship education policy has been reoriented away from a politics arena, but towards an emphasis on self-identity and reflection, such as personal moral and ideological principles, and it aims to produce such “good citizens” with obedience (Lee & Ho, 2008). Zhu & Feng (2006) expressed that the fundamental aim of citizenship education is to foster active citizens with practical capacities rather than theorists playing with abstract citizenship knowledge. On the contrary, a citizenship learner should be encouraged to experience citizenship practices not only in class also in real life in order to improve their abilities to get involved in civic activities (Zhu & Feng, 2006).

Third, scholars are worried about the authoritative role of the government in citizenship education. For instance, The Ministry of Education of the PRC stipulated that “citizens should foster awareness of socialist concepts of democracy, the rule of law, freedom, equality, equity and justice”.¹⁸ The word “socialist” here indicates that there is an official

¹⁸ Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China (MOEPRC). (2010) *Guojia zhongchangqi jiaoyu gaige he fazhan guihua gangyao (2010–2020)* [Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)]. Retrieved from http://education.news.cn/2010-07/29/c_12389320_2.htm. Accessed 10 December 2015.

understanding of “citizen” in the CPC policies, who are expected to adhere to socialism and communism, and not to challenge the relevant democratic process. In addition, curriculum design, textbook composition, assessment methods and relevant civic activities such as patriotism rituals in ideological and political education are strictly in accordance with this official understanding of “citizens” (Zhu, 2010). On the contrary, students’ daily citizenship learning was greatly ignored, and little is known about the views of Chinese university students about citizenship learning.

3.2.3 Conclusion of this section

The main purpose of this section has been to evaluate the precondition of active participation for cultural citizenship in the Chinese context. Active citizenship in Chapter Two means “participation in civic society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy” (Hoskins, 2006). Referring to this definition, it could be argued that citizenship education in the Chinese context is not designed to promote active participation among university students.

To be specific, citizenship was not traditionally developed in ancient China. Although civic consciousness appeared at the beginning of 21st century, it did not develop further. The CPC articulated the notion of the citizen again after the foundation of the PRC, and employed ideological and political education as a means to construct its notion of “citizen” around Marxism, socialism and collectivism. Ideological and political education was reformed in 2005 with the intention to carry out the task of delivering citizenship education among Chinese university students. However, scholars expressed their doubts about its competency for citizenship education.

3.3 Exploring the preconditions of cultural citizenship in China (2): the “Public sphere”

As briefly mentioned in Chapter Two, the public sphere, especially the digital public sphere, in less developed countries also showed relevant implications for democracy as it

does in the western context (See p.60). However, when it comes to the situation of China, state interference over popular culture and mass media is heavily noted. Thus, discussion of the public sphere in the Chinese context, in particular the situation of popular culture and mass media, is conducted in this section.

3.3.1 Does the public sphere exist in China?

There emerged a heated discussion over whether the term of the “public sphere” can be applied into the Chinese context among scholars researching China in the 1990s (Diamond, 1994; Gold, 1990; Gough, 2004; He, 1997; Shils, 1996; Yang, 2004). Some scholars argued that China may have the longest sustained history of civic discourses of any nation in the world, as it possesses a 5000 year old civilization (Powers & Kluver, 1999, p.1). For instance, the Chinese ancient ideology “thought of people” could be viewed as a rudiment for citizenship to some degree, as it paid attention to the importance of people.¹⁹ Moreover, Rowe (1990) felt that the emergent political lexicon of “Gong” during the Qing and Republican eras is also related to the notion of the “public sphere”, as “Gong” referred to a variety of emerging public utilities and public services which is outside of direct state control. In addition, the traditional vocabularies of Shimin (the “People” in urban cities) and “popular society” are very close to the concept of the public sphere (Liang, 2001; Ma, 2006). To be specific, Xu (2003) argues that schools, newspapers and teaching organizations (Xuehui in Chinese) are primary forms of the public sphere which emerged in modern Shanghai. A similar example was pointed out that the teahouse in modern Chengdu (a southwest city in China) became an important public sphere for all walks of people at that time, because it was no longer only a place for entertainment (Wang, 2005).²⁰

However, according to Habermas’ classic model of the public sphere which is separated

¹⁹ See the thought of “benevolence” in Confucius School, “The people are more important than the ruler” in Mencius School and the motto of “while water can carry a boat, it can also overturn it” from Tang Taizong, one of the greatest emperors through Chinese history.

²⁰ See the speech ‘Teahouse and tea guests: a micro study of the public sphere and public life in modern cities of China’ by Wang (2005) on 21 September 2005, Retrieved from <http://www.cssm.org.cn/view.php?id=13784>. Assessed 10 December 2015

from the government as well as the western understanding of civil society which is characterized with western democratic laws and automatic institutions (Almond & Verba, 1963; Putnam, 2000), the general argumentation is that contemporary China has not been in a position to build a vibrant public sphere and civic society until the post-Mao reform era of the later 1970s. Yan (2003) argues that the State tried to promote collectivism in the age of collectivization in China (1949-1999), thus participation in the public life was always strictly controlled by the Party-state. One fundamental factor contributing to the emergence of the public sphere is that the central government of China is undergoing a fundamental transformation from being traditionally seen as central authoritarianism to a governance effectively regulated by laws in the early 21st century (Li, 2009). In addition, the soaring development of CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and other types of social organizations are key resources for promoting the public sphere (Li, 2009). It is estimated that the number of existing CSOs is between 2 million and 2.7 million, and they are more “citizen-oriented, self-determining, organized, voluntary, and legitimate” (Yu, 2009). Therefore, it argues that the public sphere is gradually emerging and on the way to developing in the Chinese context (Shi, 2011).

A factor also relevant to this issue is the development of the Internet, as scholars argue that the internet has brought hope for the public sphere in China (Chen, 1999; Luo, 2007; Shi, 2011; Yang, 2006). The year of 2008 is called “the first year of internet politics in China” by media reports²¹, as 30 per cent of social hot events were first revealed and discussed online by internet users.²² Compared with the traditional mass media, the Internet provides a platform for common people’s practices of “right to know”, “right to speak” and supervision rights, which would bring positive effects to political participation (Xiong, 2001). Zheng (2008, p.16) argues that the interaction between the government, social organizations and individuals will provide motivation for political reforms in China.

²¹ See Da shuju Beijing xia de wangluo wenzheng [the Internet Politics under Big Data]. Retrieved from <http://china.huanqiu.com/article/2014-09/5155064.html> Accessed 10 December 2015.

²² See Shehui Lanpishu [The Social Blueprint], Published by Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2009. Retrieved from http://www.yichang.gov.cn/art/2008/12/16/art_72_117897_3.html, Accessed on 12 July, 2014.

Nevertheless, there is a general consensus that China's public sphere is still in a fragile state due to the existence of its central authoritarianism. To be specific, the political system remains communist with a single party, and the degree of freedom of thought and speech is comparatively limited (Lee, 2010). In addition, people in China don't have as many alternative information sources and participation channels beyond the control of the Government (Zheng & Wu, 2005). While modern western society is governed by law, Stockman (2000) argues that traditional Chinese society depends on the specific nature of relations and the network. In addition, unlike Western counterparts, the civic organizations in China are still immature, neither completely independent from the government nor voluntary (Yu, 2009). The result is that public intellectuals in contemporary China are less likely to express critical views when commenting on civic issues (Luo, 2006). Xiong (2001) also contends that although the digital public sphere has emerged in China, it is still not fully developed.

3.3.2 The status of popular culture and of mainstream culture

Madsen (1993) contends that a cultural dimension should be emphasized in discussion of Habermas' classic model of the public sphere. To be specific, if individuals can interpret and share meanings through their aesthetic experience, they will be in a position to create moral communities. This is also the essence of the aesthetic public sphere and cultural citizenship discussed in Chapter Two. It thus infers the need to understand different kinds of culture among university students in contemporary China.

Youth popular culture in contemporary China is understood as an unofficial and "provocative imaged culture" in urban China (Lull, 1991, p.48). Popular culture is also referred to as a non-mainstream culture, in contrast with the mainstream culture in China. Research on popular culture in China generally gives a warning of its potentially negative influence on university students. For instance, Wei (2001) claimed that non-mainstream culture is a mutant form of the mainstream culture, and it is negative and backward, which would mislead university students' values (Li, 2008), interrupt their psychological health (Jiao, 2007) and hinder students' further development (Zhang & Wang, 2005). Wang (2004)

particularly examined the effect of media violence on young people's behaviours. Based on those argumentations, researchers then argue for the need for regulation in young people's consumption of popular culture. For instance, Song (2007) contends that a more favourable environment for ideological and political education should be fostered with the intention to minimize the negative effects of mass culture. Zhou et al. (2008) continue to argue that the government needs to implement rules guiding students' media use.

On the contrary, Chinese mainstream culture is placed as the dominant status over different typologies of culture by the central government. Although it tends to absorb merits from the Chinese traditional culture and foreign culture, its fundamental aim is to provide propaganda for a culture with Chinese characteristics under the guide of Marxism, and elements of socialism, communism and the Party have been positioned with important status in the notion of Chinese mainstream culture (Li, 2009). Traditional mass media such as broadcasting and newspapers were first employed as an organ of the CPC to convey the mainstream culture in China, and the CPC has established firm organizational control over the Chinese media system through the Party's Central Propaganda Department (Lee, 2010; Sun & Chang, 2001). Instead of aiming to act as a public sphere and promote citizens to discuss public and political issues, traditional mass media in China are more likely to function as a tool for the Party to disseminate its political propaganda (Wang et al., 2008). For instance, as one of the national newspapers in contemporary China, The People's Daily²³ reports national and international affairs with the main task to propagandize the central spirit and the latest Party policies timely and accurately. It developed its electronic version online in 2010. The Figure 3.2 below shows an example of a news report of The Peoples' Daily, which is translated from Chinese.

²³ It is the newspaper of the CPC established in 1948, which was elected as one of the ten most authoritative and influential newspaper by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.

On December 31st, the Chinese people's Political Consultative Conference National Committee held a New Year tea at the National Political Consultative Conference Hall. Chinese central leaders came together and celebrated the coming of the New Year. Chairman Shi delivered the speech: we Chinese will fully implement the spirit of the 18th CPC National Congress, the third Plenary Session and the fourth Plenary Sessions of 18th CPC Congress, continue to push forward the comprehensive well-off society under the direction of Deng Xiaoping theory, "Three Represents" and Scientific Development Outlook, deepening the reform comprehensively, govern the country according to law, strengthen the people's livelihood security, and timely complete of the objectives of "the task of the Twelfth Five Year Plan".

Figure 3.2: A report on a front page of “The People’s Daily” on 1st Jan, 2015 (Retrieved from http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2015-01/01/nw.D110000renmrb_20150101_1-01.htm, Accessed on 15 June 2015)

The significance of maintaining the dominant place of mainstream culture for China’s modernization is justified by Chinese scholars. For instance, Zhang (2008) believes that mainstream culture could play an important role in guiding and motivating university students. Contemporary young people have been criticized for their weak commitment to the mainstream ideology (Fan, 2009). Thus it seems clear that it is becoming an urgent task to cultivate mainstream culture among university students (Liu & Zhang, 2010). However, an online survey in 2010, conducted together by three famous Chinese websites, People, Sina and Tecent, revealed that 54.3% thought that the dominant mainstream culture is characterized by doctrine and persuasion, and 73.6% of the respondents thought that it lacked concern for reality (Ai & Du, 2010).

Returning to the report illustrated in Figure 3.2 in The People’s Daily, reports on this same social issue on different kinds of mass media could provide some thoughts on the situation of mainstream culture among young people. The New Years Eve of 2014 has become a special day for the Chinese people. It was reported that a stampede killed 36 people in Shanghai on that night. Mass media covered this accident immediately after its occurrence, and the differences in reporting of the various mass media outlets could be clearly observed. There was no coverage of this accident on the front page of The People’s Daily

on 1st January, 2015, and few words were spent to report this event at the inside pages of that edition. Turning to the serious news on the television, it was filled with coverage of official leaders' condolences and families' sadness, while the cause of this accident was not explored too much. However, when looking at the social network of micro blogging, heated discussion went on and lasted for several days. Many serious discussion topics occurred on the social network: who should be responsible for this accident? Does it reflect the weakness of governmental organizations? It is interesting to notice that people left millions of similar comments on the online version of "The People's Daily".

3.3.3 Mass media censorship in China

In most western research, China has a notorious history of media control and censorship (Wu, 2012). In 2005, Reporters Without Borders published the Worldwide Press Freedom Index, where China was placed at 159 out of 167 countries²⁴, because the media is employed as the mouthpiece of the Party to shape the "values and perspective of the entire population" (Kenneth, 2004). To be specific, the main task of the media is to strengthen the positive image of the Party and to motivate the masses to respond actively to the guidelines of the Party and the government.

The internet became the most influential form of information communication in the 21st century in China, and social networks such as micro blogging have been popular with young people since 2005. However, it is widely reported worldwide that the Chinese government continues to take extensive measures to monitor and control citizens' internet use, such as filtering information by imposing a far-reaching firewall, blocking sections of foreign websites such as Facebook and YouTube, and prohibiting some sensitive words or phrases from being published online (James, 2009). For instance, such sensitive words as "June Fourth" or "Falun Gong" have been blocked. When it comes to the criteria of "dangerous" or "harmful" information on the internet, it is decided by the government, as information on the internet have to be in accordance with the mainstream national media.

²⁴ Reporters Without Borders, "Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2005," Retrieved from http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=554. Accessed on 12 January, 2013.

3.3.4 Conclusion of this section

There is a general consensus that the public sphere in Habermas' classic model is taking shape in the early 21st century in contemporary China; however it is still at a primary stage. When it comes to considering the digital public sphere in the Chinese context, the problems of popular culture and mass media censorship have posed challenges to the enactment of cultural citizenship. Referring to the literature review in Chapter 2, it shows the importance of the public sphere for the enactment of cultural citizenship in the western context. Of significant relevance to this research, the existence of the digital public sphere is particularly crucial for cultural citizenship. Therefore, the analysis in this section argues that the second precondition for cultural citizenship in the Chinese context seems under developed or unexplored by Chinese scholars.

3.4 Research on Chinese university students' media use

After examining the digital public sphere in the Chinese context, it has been shown theoretically that the conditions for the enactment of cultural citizenship are not provided for young people as they are in the western context. In this part, current research about mass media's influence on Chinese university students is reviewed for further information.

3.4.1 Youth values problems under the influence of mass media

Mass media is no longer only a means to get information; rather it has developed into a prevalent context for general communication for current university students in China (Zhao, 2011). Research also shows that young people's understanding of society, their comprehension of social rules, and even their formation of life values largely comes from the mass media (Yu, 2005).

However, university students are always regarded as passive recipients in most mass media research. For example, it is argued that mass media appears to be a force of alienation. "Alienation" first appeared as a philosophical term, and it is understood as contradiction and conflict in the Chinese language (Zhang, 1993). In this sense, mass media would divert

university students' healthy psychological development and make them attached to commercial exploitation (Cai, 2013). Research emphasis is placed on mass media's negative influence on students' developments. For instance, Chen (2012) pointed out that current TV soaps, talent shows and uploaded videos could not provide informative knowledge for students, for those programs always distort social reality in order to win watching quotas. In addition, Sun (2008) argued that mass media such as TV and movies should bear certain responsibility for existing problems of divisions within communities, violence and values confusion among the youth. It was reported that youth crimes caused by the negative influence of media programs accounted for 30% of the crime total during the years of 2007-2009 (Han, 2009).

Besides the potential values and morality problems caused by the mass media among university students, scholars also emphasized challenges proposed to ideological and political education in universities by mass media (Li, 2003). It is argued that the vast volume of information relating to western ideology, values and living styles on the Internet would lead to the dismissing of nationalism and patriotism among university students (Chen, 2002), because western ideology is supposed to contaminate those traditional social merits advocated in political education (Chen, 2012). In addition, individualism promoted in western culture is deconstructing traditional collectivism in China and challenging the authority of our traditional ideology (Liang, 2011).

In attempts to minimize the negative influence of mass media among Chinese university students, two particular approaches could be generally summarized from the literature. One of these is to promote educational reforms in ideological and political education in universities with the intention to strengthen its status among university students. Hui and Qu (2001) emphasized the importance of receiving feedback from students when they are learning courses within ideological and political education. In addition, teaching methods should be improved from simply indoctrination to motivation based on students' personal needs and characteristics (Hu, 2007). Another is to control the mass media environment for students, and the government is entitled to filter or delete harmful information, and

fundamentally clarify the media environment (Chen, 2002). The government should always arm students with scientific theories, direct students with correct public opinions, mould students with noble spirit and motivate them with excellent works under the notion that “mass media should always represent the developing direction of the advancement of culture in China” (Jiang, 2002).²⁵

To summarize, mass media research among university students in China generally pays attention to students’ values problems under its negative influence, and emphasizes the importance of ideological and political education among students. In addition, the necessity of mass media control is rationalized by scholars with the intention to provide a healthy media environment for students.

3.4.2 Mass media’s implications for active citizenship

Although mass media research in China mainly discusses values problems under the framework of ideological and political education among university students, there also emerges the research on mass media’s implications for citizenship and democracy. Chinese scholars have started to deal with university students’ civic participation as well as mass media’s influence on participation in the 21st century.

Problems among students’ political participation have been identified by scholars. Jing (2001) summarizes four categories of political participation existing among the youth in China: learning political theories, following political issues, attending political activities and dedicating to political life. However, it could be argued that the emphasis is only placed on students’ political participation related to the CPC and ideological and political education in the Chinese context.

Kong (2008) found that students from the technical college are inactive in such political participation as discussion about political issues, commenting on the CPC’s policies,

²⁵ The former president of PRC Jiang Zemin delivered this speech in the 16th National Congress of CPPCC. See the article of Quannian jianshe xiaokang shehui, kaichuang zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi shiye xin jumian in the book *Shiliuda Baogao Fuzhu Duben*, p.34. Beijing: People’s Publishing House.

transmitting political news and providing suggestions for the university management. Similarly, Li (2005) made the argument that university students' voluntary contact with political issues is rare in real practices. In addition, most of their political participation is passive and separated from daily life (Shen et al., 2006). Wang and Chen (2006) argued that students' limited political knowledge, weak participation ability and low participation intention lead to constraints in their political participation. Moreover, university students are less likely to have enough time to attend political participation due to the stress of job hunting (Li, 2005). Besides possible reasons from students' perspectives, Shen et al. (2006) contends that the inability to provide enough channels for students in current political participation mechanisms would be another fundamental reason.

Later research tends to pay more attention to mass media's influence on students' civic participation. For instance, mass media is found to be the main channel for technical college students to receive political information (Kong, 2008). It would first affect students' political attitudes, feeling and evaluation, and it then would finally influence their political participation (Zhang, 2005). Similarly with the research in the western context, the influence of different types of mass media is explored in China. As to the newspapers, it is found that people spending more time reading newspapers are more likely to develop good knowledge of social affairs (Liao & Zhang, 2005). In addition, watching public affairs on television is positively related with political participation while entertainment TV is not (Zhang & Chia, 2006).

As to the popular mass media of the Internet, scholars in mainland China generally held negative attitudes towards its influence on political participation. To be specific, internet technology would bring problems such as information explosion, information monopoly and political deception, which would lead to potential negative influence on students' political participation (Huang & Chen, 2001; Wang, 2006). It shows that Chinese scholars have not moved far beyond the simplistic division between "utopianism" and "pessimism" in their evaluation of the Internet, whereas the third strand of understanding the Internet as a site of struggle and expression pointed out in Chapter 2 receives little attention.

There has been an increasing research interest in the civic role of social media among Chinese scholars. Zhang (2009) argued that the expected linkages between SNS use and civic engagement cannot be validated. Similarly, Zhong (2014) contended that although using SNS is positively related with bonding and bridging social capital online and offline, which is then positively related to online civic involvement, it is not significantly related to offline civic behaviours. Thus studies focusing upon online activities and civic participation are relatively rare and not well studied.

3.5 An overview of the wider picture: potential characteristics of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context

With the deepening process of socialist modernization, the cultural dimension of citizenship is more interrelated with people's lives. As the political public sphere in the Chinese context is controlled and immature, it is probably meaningful to explore ordinary citizens' reflection on and discussions about civic issues using alternative channels, for example, the mass media. For instance, Zheng and Wu (2005) found that the Internet seems to exert a more substantial political impact in China than in democratic countries, as people in China do not have as many alternative venues beyond the Internet for expressing personal opinions and participating in public affairs as those people in democratic countries.

A meaningful example can be found in research that has been conducted recently into a significant cultural event called Super Girl in China, a most influential nationwide talent TV show since 2005. Scholars argue that the producers essentially used the form of participatory democracy as a commodity to attract audiences, as votes from audiences were used in deciding competition results (Jian & Liu, 2009). By examining newspaper discourses about Super Girl, Wu (2011) argues that attention on this program could develop into public discussion about social issues, civic values and moral standards. Wu (2011) made further studies on audiences' online discourses and found more discussion about fairness and democratic values related to civic issues, which to some extent confirmed the argument of cultural citizenship among ordinary citizens. Similarly, Lee

(2010) argues that the popular media forms a new public sphere and provokes more debates, which is different from the rational political public sphere.

Relevant research further targets university students with the intention to explore a comprehensive picture of students' specific mass media experience. As a preliminary step to understanding students' experience with mass media, Yao (2014) conducted a survey aimed at university students and found that students have shown explicit aims and positive attitudes to using mass media. In addition, the rate of blindly accepting information is rather low. Lin & Starkey (2014) examined Chinese university students' online discourses in social networks and argued that students' engagement with civic issues can be observed in their social network use, thus indicating the enactment of cultural citizenship and lifestyle politics in students' everyday lives. Therefore, inspired by the wider picture of civic practices, more attention needs to be paid to students' active interaction with mass media rather than to protect them from potentially negative influences in the Chinese context. In addition, more efforts should be made to explore the influence of different types of mass media, especially the Internet and social networks.

Scholars within the cultural citizenship camp caution that the commercial nature of citizens' new mass media activities might end up diluting the development of the cultural public sphere. Governments employ types of mass media such as radio, film and art policies to draw members of society into its established state structures (Miller, 1998), and Miller (2007) warns that it would turn citizens into consumers of cultural products such as entertainment shows, and citizens would be less likely to enter into political forums to debate on public issues. Referring to the proposed two preconditions for cultural citizenship, it can be seen that relevant efforts should be made for the actual enactment of cultural citizenship. In particular, whether and how such efforts as online discussion and participation can be channelled into formal politics in civic life in the Chinese context needs further exploration; otherwise the theory of cultural citizenship remains useless for pragmatic purposes.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has theoretically examined the potential of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context by reviewing its two preconditions proposed in the western context. On the one hand, the review of historical development of citizenship in China and the current citizenship education curriculum in Chinese universities indicated the inadequate environment for active participation among university students. On the other hand, the discussion of the public sphere in China revealed an immature image when comparing to its western understanding. The dominant status of mass culture and media censorship indicated an unfavourable condition for civic deliberation in the digital public sphere. In addition, although mass media's implications for political participation were noticed, there is far less literature in this research area in the Chinese context.

In summary, Chapter 2 has laid the foundation for situating this research in existing literature of cultural citizenship. The analysis supports the view that popular culture and mass media has the potential to promote civic understanding and civic participation and thereby develop new understanding of citizenship as well as civic learning. In addition, further literature positions active participation and the existence of the public sphere as preconditions for the enactment of such notions as cultural citizenship. In this case, it requires policies to promote active participation and to ensure the freedom for discussion and access is available to citizens. However, the relevant literature in the Chinese context in Chapter 3 found unfavourable conditions for the enactment of cultural citizenship both in university citizenship education and in the digital public sphere. In addition, it is concluded that there is a lack of knowledge aiming to identify the potential of citizens to become more active with their engagement through mass media.

The foregoing review of the wider picture identified some literature concerning the civic impact of mass media and signified the enactment of cultural citizenship among ordinary citizens in China. To date, only a few research studies, employing qualitative research approaches such as online discourses analysis, have provided evidence of the online public

sphere in the Chinese context. Therefore, an incentive is provided to investigate university students' civic experience with mass media with the intention to explore whether the notion of cultural citizenship could be applied in the Chinese context. In addition, the cultural citizenship perspective also highlights the research need to examine how these efforts through mass media could be channelled into real politics among university students. In the next chapter, discussion is extended to construct a conceptual framework for the research aims and to identify the methodology of this proposed study.

Chapter Four The conceptual framework and methodology for this research

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to describe the conceptual framework and to present the methodological approach selected to address the research questions presented in Chapter One. The chapter first synthesizes the reviewed literature and develops a conceptual framework that situates the theory of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context. The chosen methodology implies “a certain type of data collection, the placing and timing for data collection, a type of analysis and a specific type of research product” (Glaser, 2004, p.1). It then continues to describe the employed research paradigm, which is a mixed methods approach, and the research process, which consists of two consecutive stages. The discussion of data management, data analysis and potential ethical issues related to this study is also presented.

4.2 The conceptual framework of this research

The literature review brings up three areas of theories: cultural citizenship, participation and the public sphere. It should be noted that these theories are widely contested and not yet fully realized in practice in the Chinese context. However, they would provide a theoretical orientation which is helpful for understanding the significance of students’ mass media experience, and is further related to citizenship education and citizenship learning in China. The literature is further synthesized for the conceptual framework for this research, which, on the one hand, examines the preconditions through which university students exercise citizenship and on the other hand, reveals the potential evidence of whether mass media has or has not achieved the enactment of cultural citizenship.

4.2.1 University students as active participants: investigating their perceptions of the university citizenship curriculum and of the “public sphere”

Chapter Two analysed two preconditions for cultural citizenship: active participation and

the existence of “the public sphere”, which underlie the potential of cultural citizenship in any particular context. After examining corresponding preconditions in China, there emerged an unpromising theoretical context for university students’ enactment of cultural citizenship.

However, civic experience of university students is not mechanically shaped by their university education or by society. Kennedy and Fairbrother (2004) found that students in the Asia-Pacific region are competent to react to what is offered to them, and their response is not presumed to be the same as what is expected by policy makers and teachers. Thus university students should never be regarded as passive recipients of citizenship education. This indicates the need to study university students’ particular response to aspects related to the preconditions for cultural citizenship, in particular civic participation in citizenship pedagogy and the public sphere in the Chinese context.

Civic commitment reflects students’ recognition of their obligation to participate in civic activities. Solid commitments to civic participation are fundamentally important for a democratic society (Barber, 1984; Boyte & Kari, 1996; Dewey, 1916). Recent studies have demonstrated that young adults who express a strong commitment to civic and political participation are more likely to be civically and politically engaged than their peers who show low levels of commitment to take actions (Ajzen, 2001; Fishbein et al., 1980; Oesterle et al., 2004). Furthermore, previous studies have shown that civic knowledge promotes political participation in both quantitative and qualitative ways (Galston, 2001), which means that the greater the civic knowledge citizens possess, the more effectively they can realize their interests in political process (Galston, 2007). A structural test for civic knowledge was included in the IEA study to test scores of students’ civic knowledge (Torney-Purta et al., 1999). However, due to the different political system as well as the immature citizenship education in China, a structural test for civic knowledge would cause confusion to Chinese university students. Rather, a broad question about students’ perceived civic commitment and civic knowledge is used with the intention to examine their perceptions in the Chinese context.

Factors that may influence the development of students' commitment to civic participation have been explored by previous research. As noted in Chapter Two, scholars find strong associations between the school-based citizenship curriculum and students' civic commitment (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). For instance, the civic study conducted by IEA introduced in Chapter Two provided a research model to examine necessary aspects related to students' civic experience under citizenship education and the wider community (Torney-Purta et al., 1999). To be specific, the provision of an open classroom climate and civic engagement opportunities is crucial for students' civic capacities and civic development (Campbell, 2005; Hart et al., 2007). In addition, the factor of whether students feel supported by the school atmosphere and teachers needs to be explored, as research shows that there is a positive relationship between school and community climates and students' civic commitment (Flanagan et al., 2007). Another factor related to citizenship education is the participation in extracurricular activities. A longitudinal study demonstrates that students' participation in extracurricular experiences especially in youth voluntary associations related to community services, speaking in public forums and community identity construction in high schools has been linked to their later civic and political participation (McFarland & Thomas, 2006).

However, this IEA study has never developed a research version for China. Considering students aged 10-14 years old were subjects of this IEA research, certain adaption was made in order to cater for the Chinese context. Finally, based on the questionnaire in the IEA research, six aspects related to the citizenship education curriculum in China are proposed in the conceptual framework including: received learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment methods, preferred learning methods, opportunities for civic participation and supports received for civic learning, for which I developed the diagram in Figure 4.1.

The theories of the "public sphere" also provide resources for the conceptual framework of this research. The civic value of social trust is an essential quality in the political public sphere. For instance, the regeneration of social trust is believed to increase voting turnout

and other modes of civic participation in politics (Putnam, 1995). In addition, the literature of the digital public sphere provides a theoretical direction for understanding the significance of mass media for civic expression and civic participation. Specifically, students' attitudes towards aspects related to the mainstream culture and media censorship in the Chinese context needs to be revealed (See Figure 4.1)

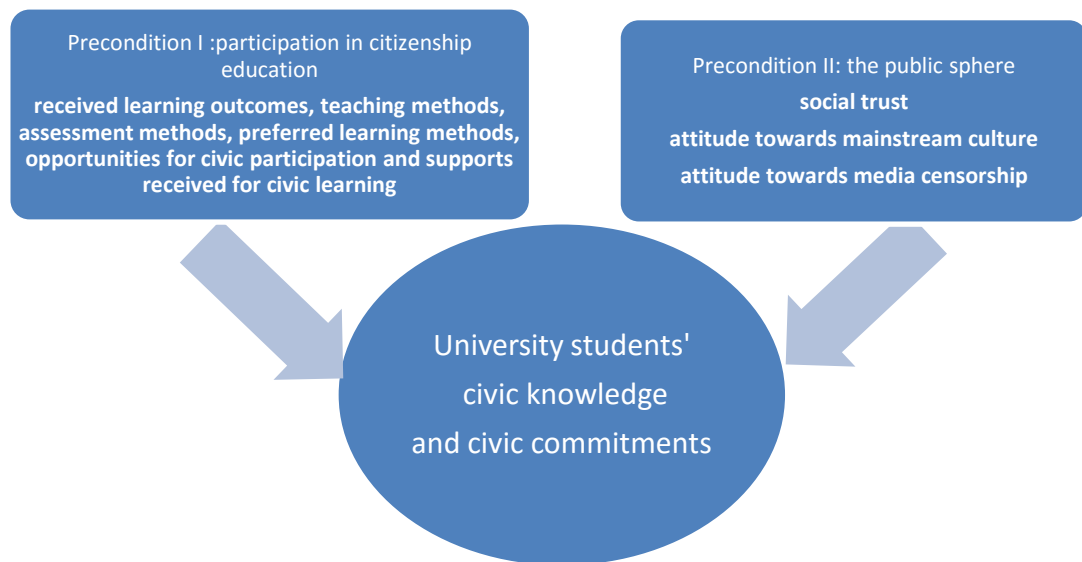


Figure 4. 1: The conceptual framework investigating university students' perceptions of university citizenship education and the "public sphere"

Referring to the literature review in Chapter Two, developing active citizens is advocated in the national curriculum in England. Contrary to the notion of "active citizen", the western discourses have the concept of "good citizens", which depicts those who tend to obey the law, address moral virtues of care and generally relate ideas of the good life to their private sphere (Crick & Lockyer, 2010). Lin and Starkey (2014) point out that the concept of "good citizens" implies a normative and conservative view of citizenship which encourages the value of conformity. In this sense, the current citizenship education in China places emphasis on fostering "good citizens" who have their loyalty to the motherland and perform submissive behaviours. Thus, within this conceptual framework of qualitative and quantitative analysis, I am interested in exploring university students' attitudes towards university citizenship curricula and mass media, what their civic participation is like in the digital public sphere, what their civic knowledge and civic

commitment are and whether they have actually behaved as active citizens or good citizens.

4.2.2 Enacting cultural citizenship: assessing university students' background, civic participation and mass media use

Referring to the civic implications of mass media emerging from the literature review (See section 2.5), it would be worth the efforts to assess the relationship between civic experience and mass media use among Chinese university students. However, relevant conceptual frameworks are often badly defined, as they often neglect factors related to individual background such as access to economic, technological and socio-cultural resources and also ignores the dynamics of youth participation in less formal political sites (Barber, 2007). Therefore, a more comprehensive model exploring university students' background, their civic experience and their mass media use based on the Chinese context would be a possible way to tackle the situation. In the following part, models for civic experience, university students' background and mass media use are proposed.

4.2.2.1 Model for civic participation

Experience refers to the knowledge or mastery of an event or subject gained through exposure to it, thus civic experience in this research means civic competencies gained through students' exposure to mass media. Hoskins et al. (2008) proposed four dimensions of civic competence: citizenship values, social justice values, participatory attitudes and cognition about democratic institutions. As noted earlier, commitment to civic participation is a fundamentally important factor for a democratic society (Barber, 1984; Boyte & Kari, 1996; Dewey, 1916). In addition, participation in civic activities is seen as a key indicator of a socially healthy, engaged, and equal society (Longford, 2005). Therefore, when exploring civic experience among university students, their experience of civic participation under mass media is mainly examined.

Referring to the definition and the typology of civic participation in Chapter Two (See 2.3.1), civic participation refers to a wide spectrum of activities which aim to address

community concerns for social development and democracy, both in a formal political sense (political participation) and in an informal sense (civic participation). The definition of political participation has developed in terms of activities (van Deth, 2001); therefore, I use two indicators of political participation in the Chinese context in this framework: voting in national-level elections and getting in touch with governmental officials. In addition, I use four indicators of civic participation: taking part in public events designed to raise awareness of equality and justice, joining a community or voluntary organization, donating money to poor people and discussing about social affairs with friends.

4.2.2.2 Model for mass media use

Referring to the literature review in Chapter Two, the relationship between the traditional media and civic participation has been discussed for many years; however, there is no concrete conclusion. Scholars recently have also focused on the relationship between new mass media such as the Internet and social networks and users' civic engagement (Donnelly-Smith, 2008; Greengard, 2009; Ishii & Wu, 2006). However, most studies have been criticized for oversimplifying the Internet by focusing on hours of use. This could cause trouble in understanding the situation where users may carry out many hours of participation but spend little time on certain kinds of media (Moy et al., 2005). Scholars in fact argue that patterns and contents of media use should also be included for research (Shah et al., 2001). Therefore, I have focused on coming up with a new and more comprehensive model which includes different aspects of mass media use for this research.

Time spent in mass media use

The first factor related to mass media is its consuming time, which is argued to be an influential factor. The more time people spend surfing the net, the more they are likely to get access to political web sites and to receive political information, thus those online activities might actually lead to an increase in levels of civic awareness and political participation (Gibson et al., 2000; Kruefer, 2002; Lupia & Philpot, 2002). However, according to the time displacement hypothesis proposed by Putnam (1995), it is indicated that more time on watching television might cause passivity among consumers and further

decrease civic engagement. Therefore, the relationship between time spent in media use and the development of civic values and engagement needs to be included in the model.

Media forms

Some research (Shah et al., 2001) has illustrated that the underlying mediating factor also depends largely on the form of the medium, as different types of mass media perform different roles and functions in people's lives. For instance, as noted earlier, television viewing in Putnam's thesis (Putnam, 1995) and Internet use (Kraut et al., 1998; Shah et al., 2001) actually have different kinds of influence on civic participation. For instance, Kraut et al (1998) find that although Internet use can enhance communication, greater use of the Internet would lead to declines in participation in families and in social circles. Rather, there is the consistent finding that newspaper reading has been found to be positively related with political and civic participation (Norris, 1996; McLeod et al., 1999; Smith, 1986). Therefore, the implications of different types of mass media for civic participation in the Chinese context are examined including TV programs, the Internet, social networks, newspapers and movies.

Media contents

Scholars have continued to argue that it is the specific media content rather than the total spent time or media types that actually affect citizens' civic values and civic participation (McLeod, 2000). For instance, as to TV programs, it is argued that long hours of attention to public affairs on television have been found to be positively related with political participation (McLeod et al., 1996; Norris, 1996; Zhang & Chia, 2006), whereas social dramas related to real life were found to enhance broad civic participation (Shah, 1998; Shah et al.; Zhang & Chia, 2006). Therefore, I use two indicators for TV programs in this research: entertainment TV programs and serious news, for example CCTV (China Central Television) news.

Similarly, as noted earlier (See p.67), different online activities may exert different influence on the outcomes of participation (Chaffee & Frank, 1996; John et al., 2002;

Pasek et al., 2006). The Internet has been found to enhance civic participation in some instances (Shah et al., 2001; Shah et al., 2002; Wellman et al., 2001). In essence, the effect of the Internet on participation depends on individuals' specific use. For instance, Shah et al. (2001) found that information gathering use among young people is positively related with their social capital, while more entertainment use of the Internet is negatively related with community spirit. However, Pasek et al. (2006) argue that media use, whether for information seeking or for entertainment purposes, both facilitate people's civic engagement. Similarly, studies have pointed out that playing video games has civic potential for social interaction (Amanda et al., 2008; Kahne et al., 2008).

In addition, studies generally conclude that the Internet's civic role mainly lies in broad civic participation rather than political participation such as elections and governmental arenas (Davis et al., 2004). For instance, Bimber and Davis (2003) claimed that the Internet will not efficiently increase election turnouts, and also will not lead to revolutionary changes in democracy. The reason is that although the Internet may increase the possibility of receiving information and discussing it with others, it does not increase the chance of getting involved in real political participation (Oblak, 2003). This review leads me to include different kinds of online activities in this research, and thus eleven different kinds of online activities are classified to examine their civic implications: online shopping; playing games, watching movies or enjoying the music; learning purposes; chatting with friends; following the news; getting involved in social discussion; forwarding social topics in personal blogs; visiting civic websites; organizing or joining in social campaigns; voting online and signing petitions.

4.2.2.3 University students' background-related factors

Previous research has shown that young people's civic perceptions and civic participation have been influenced by a number of factors, including the contexts of family, schools and personal characteristics such as age and gender. I then move to identify who is engaging in these forms of civic participation.

Among factors related to the context of family, the importance of socio-economic background has been emphasized in recent studies of civic participation as it affects individuals' access to different forms of capital. The term parental socio-economic status (SES), with a combination of three sub-indicators of parents' income, education and occupation, is used as a common indicator to understand individuals' civic participation (Gottfried, 1985; White, 1982). However, the adapting of this concept in my study presented some difficulties. On the one hand, it could be sensitive, and participants could feel uncomfortable answering such questions. On the other hand, the historical development of civic consciousness and civic participation in China has indicated its weak motivation from family contexts. Taking these into consideration, specific questions of SES are not explored in this study, rather the question of participants' birth place is included, and three choices are provided: cities, towns and villages.

Besides the family context, school is the other important context for the socialization of young people (Almond & Verba, 1963), which is argued to be more influential than the home context (Hess & Torney, 1968). In this regard, factors related to the university and classroom climate have been proposed within the research framework (See section 4.2.1). In addition, it is found that young people who attend four-year colleges demonstrated a higher level of civic participation than those who attend two-year institutions (Lopez & Brown, 2006), thus indicating the need to examine different educational institutional types in China.²⁶ However, this factor is set aside for further study due to time constraints, as it would cost more time in selecting different types of universities and conducting empirical research. Considering the fact that the same official framework of ideological and political education is being implemented in different institutions, general similar findings could be expected if targeting the research sample in one university institution.

The context of each individual student requires to be explored with regards to participants'

²⁶ Different educational institutional types in China include: public elite universities (referring to those listed in Project 985 and Project 211 which would receive more financial supports from the Government), less elite public universities (referring to those not being listed in Project 985 and Project 211) and private educational institutions (referring to those provide career education).

gender, educational level, educational background, political status and their interest and motivation in civic issues.

Gender

The IEA study showed that gender differences existed with regards to indicators of civic participation: in most countries males tended to have higher levels of political interest and expected participation (Torney-Purta et al., 1999). Bimber (2000) argued that women usually spent less time on the Internet than men, and the gap can even increase in some intensive use (Albrecht, 2006). Van Dijk (2005) also pointed out that boys and girls prefer different forms of online participation. For instance, girls do not like computer games because they involve no social interaction and contain too many competitive elements (Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006). Therefore, the variable of gender is included in this study.

Educational level

The individual attribute of age is found to be associated with civic behaviours (Amadeo et al., 2002; Foster-Bey, 2008; Tossutti & Wang, 2006). As this research is targeting Chinese university students in the same age level, differences in age are not expected to be a research concern. However, this factor could be reflected in differences between educational levels in different study years. Referring to Chapter Three about the curriculum design in universities as well as students' particular situation, the variable of educational level is worth exploring.

Educational background

There are probably certain differences across disciplines in pedagogical practices due to the focus placed on particular types of academic knowledge (Chatman, 2007). Whether there will be different patterns in civic perceptions and civic participation across different disciplines is therefore interesting to explore. Three groups of disciplines: natural science/technology, social sciences and humanities are normally included in western discourses as the indicators of students' individual characteristics. However, majors in the

Chinese university system are traditionally divided into two groups: arts and science,²⁷ and students tend to be more familiar with this division. Therefore, I included two aspects, science and arts, as indicators of students' educational background.

Political status

Party affiliation is another factor influencing civic behaviours. For instance, if a party or an organization promotes certain political activities for its own purpose, civic intention and civic participation among its members would be correspondingly encouraged (Pu, 1989). It is also found that the social network is the main source for political discussion and adult motivation (See Sharon et al., 2005). The affiliation to a party or an organization would provide a steady setting for its members and it is likely to promote members' involvements in civic activities. A virtuous circle of engagement would occur in people's political engagement: the already-engaged become more interested, while the unengaged become less interested (Couldry et al., 2006; Norris, 2000). In this connection, the variable of political status among university students is included for examination. The vast majority of university students joined the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC)²⁸ in their middle schools, and a small number of students gradually became members of the CPC in higher school grades. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate differences between groups of students based on their party membership.

Interests and motivation

Besides the above individual factors, researchers have started to investigate more detailed and potential factors which may contribute to explaining students' civic participation. Scholars argue that the influence of the Internet may be conveyed and moderated by some other middle variables such as individuals' civic interests and motivations (Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003; Livingston & Markham, 2008; Van Deth et al.,

²⁷ The category of arts includes majors such as economics, education, law and philosophy which are similar to those categorized under social sciences and humanity, and the category of science includes majors such as mathematics, chemistry, philosophy and engineer.

²⁸ The Communist Youth League of China (CYLC) is an organization for young people lead by the CPC. Students over 14 years old are encouraged to join this organization, and CYLC organize activities related to socialism and the Party

2007). For instance, some studies in political communication have pointed out that individuals' interests in politics serve as a powerful indicator for their actual participation (Chaffee et al., 1994).

Finally, in Figure 4.2 I illustrated how the second part of the framework for quantitative analysis is developed based on the discussion of the existing indicators of mass media and civic participation. Two proposed research questions in Chapter One are particularly examined using this framework:

What are the effects of entertainment TV programs, serious news programs, the Internet, social networks, newspaper reading and movies on students' political participation or civic participation offline?

What are the specific effects of different online activities on students' political participation or civic participation offline?

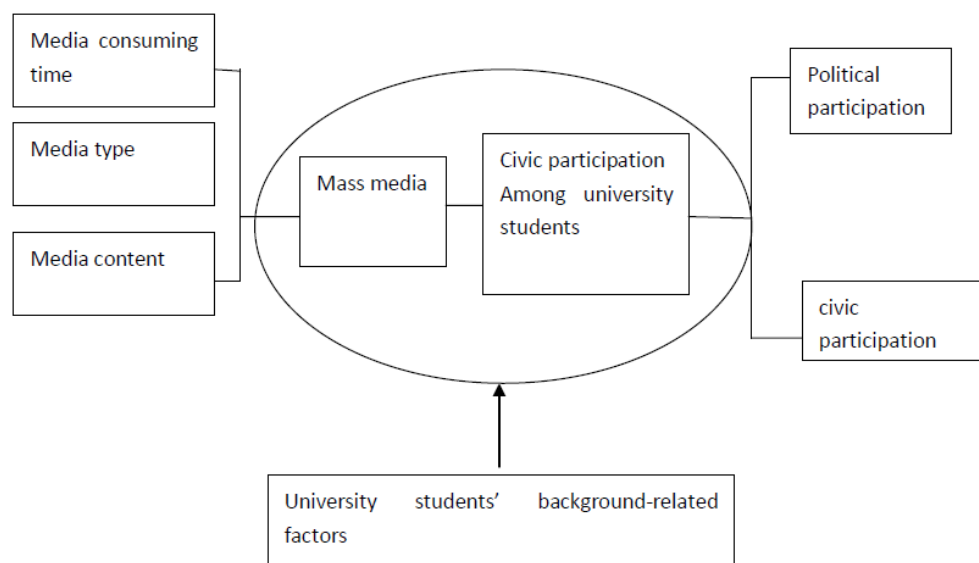


Figure 4. 2: The conceptual framework of mass media, civic participation and individual background

4.3 Methodology

This section sets out to describe the methodological approach to this research and its underlying philosophical assumptions. The concept of methodology rather than research

methods is used here, because the concept of methodology is not restricted to describe specific strategies and procedures of data collection and analysis, but reflects a collective ontological and epistemological standing point, ethical consideration, “general preference for designs, guidelines for making inferences and the criteria for assessing and improving quality” (Teddie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.21). These aspects are explained in sequence as follows:

- Ontological and Epistemological standing points
- The design of mixed methods research
- Research design: explanatory sequential strategy
- Sample selection
- Stage one: the questionnaire research method
- Stage two: the qualitative research method
- Data management and analysis procedures
- Potential ethical issues

4.3.1 Ontological and epistemological positions

There is a tendency for quantitative and qualitative research methods to be regarded as embodying different methodologies. However, discussion has been continuously held over such division. Scholars have expressed their doubt about whether the difference between qualitative and quantitative research can indicate the difference in methodological approaches of a particular study. In fact, attention should be paid firstly to the selection of a research paradigm and a plan for pursuing the methodology within the chosen research paradigm at the beginning of a research study (Creswell, 1998b; Morse, 2003).

A research paradigm is the relation between ontology, epistemology and methodology (Admiraal & Wubbels, 2005, p.315). In fact it can be viewed as a set of basic beliefs, which defines the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the corresponding possible relationships between different parts (Guba & Lincoln, 2004, p.21). Ontology means our conception of social reality and research objects; epistemology indicates the values we hold in understanding knowledge. Specifically, it is related to how we

understand knowledge and what kind of knowledge is possible in the study of the social and human world (Delanty & Strydom, 2003). Methodology refers to the investigative approach consistent with these above principles (Guba & Lincoln, 2004, p.21-22; Bryman, 2004; Denscombe, 2002). Therefore, studies starting from different ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs may lead to different research approaches and outcomes (Admiraal & Wubbels, 2005, p.315). Referring to the classification in Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) work, a brief review of research paradigms proposed in my research is presented below.

Positivism

The positivist paradigm refers to sets of beliefs such as: the nature of the world viewed as stable reality can be revealed using numbers and order (ontology); the researcher and the object are separate, and research results are true and replicable (epistemology), which means that someone else following the same procedure should obtain the same results within the same population; experiments and quantitative methods are used to test hypotheses (methodology). In this case, positivism is most commonly related to natural sciences research such as mathematics and physics. Using numbers and statistical patterns, a clear map of research objects can be obtained.

Some scholars propose to adapt quantitative methods in social science area, which thus indicates the application of positivism approaches into social science research (Bryman, 2004). Nevertheless, this adaptation was greatly criticized in social science literature, as it separates itself from a political and social context in which relevant research operates (Sprague & Zimmerman, 2004, p.40-44). Similarly, Durkheim (1996, cited from Perez Exposito, 2013) argues that if positivism is brought into social science, social facts would be seen as things just like the objects of natural science research, which means that the explanation of human behaviours would only be found in facts, structures or forms that transcend individuals' consciousness. Guba and Lincoln (2004) continue to point out that numbers and percentages in a positivist paradigm are not enough to reflect and explain human behaviours, for human behaviours are not physical objects, but full of potential

intention and purposes that lie behind human actions.

Interpretivism

This paradigm serves as an alternative to positivism in research, with the main proposition that interpretivism tends to reflect the distinctiveness of humans against the natural order (Bryman, 2004, p.13), whilst the researchers remain aware of their own roles in shaping the process (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). In the interpretivist paradigm, ontology indicates that the nature of the reality is multiple and socially constructed, which influences the epistemology that findings can be obtained through the interaction between researchers and participants. The generally applied methodology is thus mainly focused inquiry using qualitative research methods including interviews, focus groups and observations, which aim to reveal most from people's personal experiences.

When a paradigm is applied in social science research, Weber (1947) made an essential argument that researchers need to be always aware of the interpretative understanding of social behaviours in order to explain both cause and effect (Weber, 1947). It is the essence of the interpretivist paradigm that research objects are reproduced within different processes of socialization and interaction (Schtuz & Luckmann, 1973). For instance, if the object of a study is young people's civic participation in China, the research should first clarify what is understood by civic participation in the Chinese context, as this notion is rather broad and can have different classifications. The interpretivist paradigm is frequently used to answer research questions in social research, for example, citizenship research studies attempting to understand how young people are involved in social life (Hall et al., 1999) and studies exploring citizenship understanding among young people (Lister, 2003).

4.3.2 Mixed methods research design: a “third wave”

Scholars proposed that factors of “explanation” and “exploration” could provide a standard which can be employed for deciding whether a quantitative or qualitative study is suitable for research questions (Crewell, 2010). An important characteristic of quantitative research

is that it tries to explain or predict relations among variables, while qualitative research tries to explore and understand the nature of particular situation. Based on a review of research paradigms for conducting research, it is incumbent on me to identify an appropriate position with which to align my own research.

When looking carefully into research questions and the conceptual framework in this research, I argue that both quantitative and qualitative methods are useful to achieve my research aims. This study explores not only students' specific attitudes and experience according to the first theoretical framework, but also examines the general pattern of students' civic participation and mass media use according to the second theoretical framework. Therefore, it is claimed that a single paradigm of either interpretivism or positivism cannot successfully address the research questions posed in my research. Thus the proposed third wave (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.17) that is mixed methods research, serves a perfect solution for my study.

There was a debate among scholars during the 1970s and the 1980s in which some theorists saw quantitative and qualitative as separate paradigms, while others saw the potential in combining the two techniques (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Mixed methods research has subsequently developed to be a separate paradigm, which is a consistent procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The underlying assumption of conducting mixed research is that a "combination of quantitative and qualitative approach provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p.9).

Although the procedure of mixed research is time-consuming and needs professional skills for data collection and analysis, there is a growing group of scholars supporting the mixed quantitative and qualitative research paradigm. When used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and can provide a more complete picture of the research problem (Greene et al., 1989), and then a very powerful mix is obtained

(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.42). A mixed methods study “gathers more information in different modes about a phenomenon” and the breadth of findings highlights shortcomings in individual methods (Giddings & Grant, 2006, p.6). Greene (1989) further argues that mixed methods research can help expand the basic research focus to develop wider implications. The complexity of research problems demands answers that are beyond “simply numbers in quantitative sense or words in qualitative sense” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p.13), and this is just the case in my research.

It is important to consider how the application of research methods reflects the chosen paradigm (Giddings & Grant, 2006). The mixed-methods approach reflects the research paradigm in my study. On the one hand, the conducting of a questionnaire indicates the positivist end of ontology, which aims to test the proposed relations and discover general information from the research sample. In addition, conducting a questionnaire will make sure that the relation between the researcher and the respondents is not interrelated, thereby helping me to separate my own perspectives from the respondents and make more objective judgments about the contents. On the other hand, the interview is the interpretivist end of ontology, for it tries to get more individualized information and reflect personal perspectives. The researcher tends to have an interactive relationship with interviewees in order to understand their situation. Responding to the discussion in section 4.3.1, it is clear that the mixed-methods approach does not mean the combination of different research methods, but it means the combination of different research paradigms in separate stages of the research process.

4.3.3 Research design: the explanatory sequential strategy

Four basic designs of mixed methods research have been generally proposed, which are the convergent parallel design, the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory sequential design and the embedded design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A brief introduction of these four designs is illustrated by Creswell and Plano Clark’s list in Figure 4.1, using abbreviations to identify QUAN(itative) and QUAL(itative) and symbols to signify their sequence and the relative importance to the research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011;

Creswell, 2003; Morse, 2003). For example, Ivankova and Stick (2007) conducted their two- phase project in higher education research and they called it a sequential explanatory study (Ivankova & Stick, 2007, p.93). The way to tell differences between these designs is based on four criteria: the priority of quantitative and qualitative data collection, the sequence of each method, the analysis methods and the mix of techniques within a study (Creswell et al., 2003).

The convergent parallel design:	the most common approach. This is usually one-phase study using parallel quantitative and qualitative methods: QUAN +QUAL
The explanatory sequential design:	A two-phase approach where (usually) qualitative data is used to build on quantitative data collected in an earlier phase. It is best suited to situations where the researcher requires additional qualitative data to support findings from a quantitative study or where a broad data set is used to support a more detailed and tightly focused study. QUAN → QUAL
The exploratory sequential design:	A two-phase approach where (usually) specific qualitative findings are further explored through a more general quantitative study. QUAL → QUAL
The embedded design:	This technique embeds one method within another to support the findings from the primary method. QUAN(qual)

Figure 4. 3: The four primary models of mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)

The proposed sequential mixed methods strategy (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009) serves as a useful guide for my small scale research, and so the explanatory sequential design was thus employed in my research. The research priority of my study is placed on the quantitative data. It is conducted first in the sequence and has the research purpose of revealing the general situation for students' attitudes and civic experience, which in turn is used to guide the qualitative data analysis. Qualitative methods then follow to elaborate and refine results from the quantitative data: for instance, to obtain more detailed and specific information, to explore some typical cases or to follow up with some extreme cases and in addition to probe issues related to the research questions in greater depth.

The concept of the “inductive spiral” pointed out by Kemshall (1998) is often used to describe a research methodology based on separate stages, as the spiral could help to present a clear map of a research route where “reasoning moves from inferring general statements from singular ones, to finally deducing singular statements from general ones” (Kemshall, 1998, p.22). In Figure 4.2 presented in the next page, my version of the inductive spiral is developed, which illustrates my ontological/epistemological standing points, methods of data collection and analysis, research aims in each research stage and further reflection on the reviewed literature which leads to the conclusive findings. This theory provides a useful tool for my research process: while data collection is being carried out, reflection could be made on received knowledge of the research area, which in turn contributes to the findings.

4.3.4 Sample selection

The data used to address the research questions in this study is collected from university students in one university institution located in Beijing. This university is carefully selected with the intention to ensure a representative research sample. Two aspects are proposed to justify my choice. First, it is a nationwide comprehensive type of university in China, including majors of natural sciences and technologies, social sciences and humanities. It welcomes more than 10000 undergraduate students from different areas of China every year. In this sense, students in this university could be seen as an image of undergraduate students in China. Second, research resources related to citizenship in this university cater to my research purposes. A research centre of citizenship and morality education was launched in this university in 2003, and it has been promoting dialogues of citizenship education between China and the wider world. Different citizenship understanding and civic practices are more likely to be introduced into the university citizenship curriculum and the campus society. It could be expected that the sample students in this university are more likely to get in touch with different civic practices, and thus more reliable response could be received.

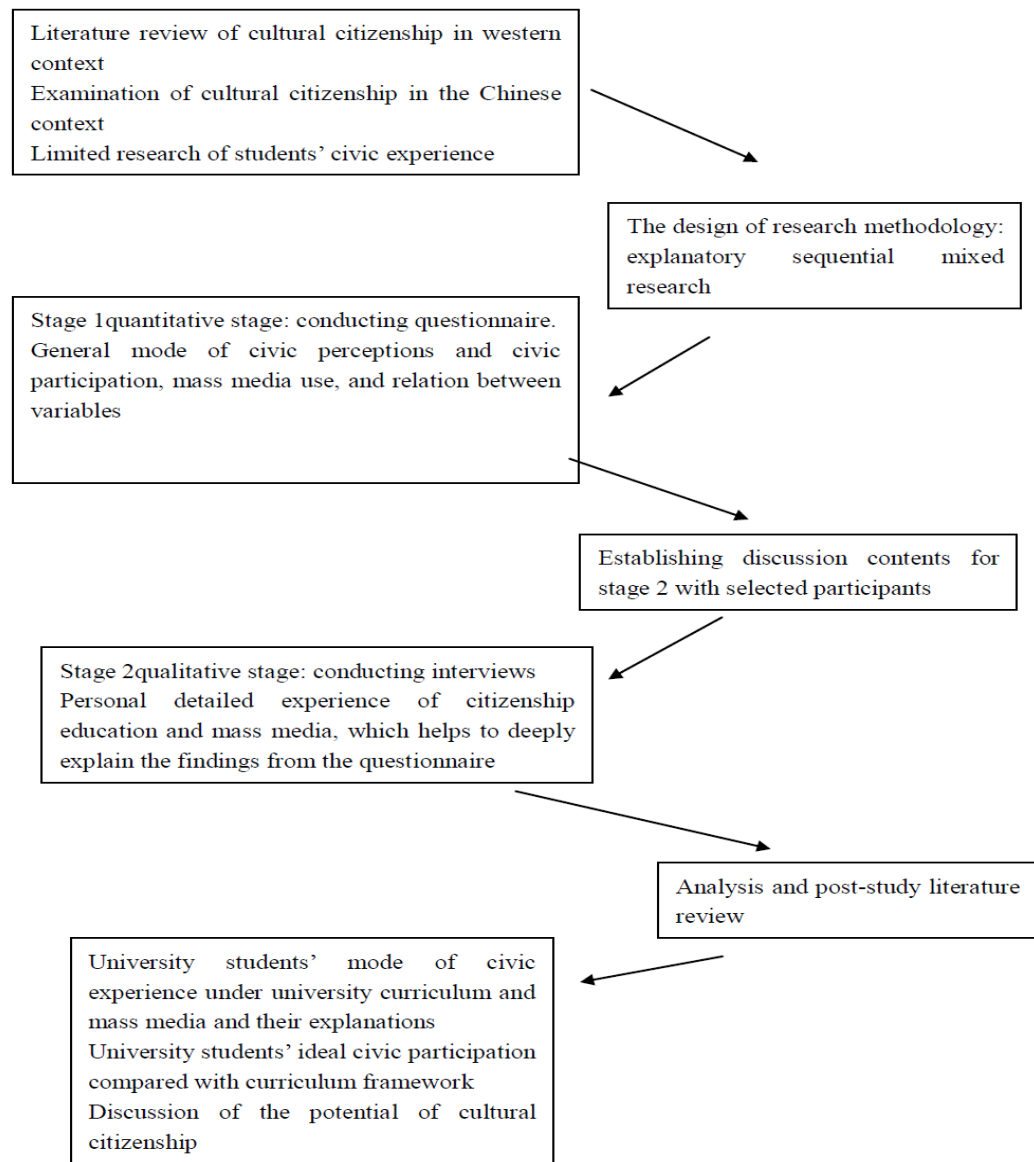


Figure 4. 4: The inductive spiral of research route in this research based on Kemshall (1998, p. 23)

The limitation of choosing this research sample is also recognized, as only focusing on one educational institution could be too narrow. There are over 4000 higher education institutions in China (Minister of Education MOE, 2009), but the data used in this mixed-methods research is mainly collected from one selected high education institution. Explicit district differences in educational systems as well as in media situation would result in students' different civic experience through the citizenship curriculum and the university environment. If the questionnaire and interviews are conducted in other types of universities, different answers would be probably received, which in turn affect the overall

analysis results. Therefore, it should be warned that the intention of this research is not to produce findings that can be generalized to all of China's higher education students, as one may be able to gain a fuller understanding of how students enact cultural citizenship through bigger samples. However, the research results in this study could still contribute to providing resources of understanding this subject area in China.

I considered conducting research at some other institutions in order to reveal more findings; however, I did not do these because of the following reasons. First, it is constrained by the research time. As a Ph.D. student studying in the UK, it is not practical to spend large amount of time in collecting data in different institutions in China. Second is the access problem. As a former student from this university, I fortunately received the help from a teacher to get access to his students, which ensures that I can get the required number of questionnaires in a much quicker way. However, if the same research needs to be carried out in other institutions, it would be more tough and time-consuming. In fact, recruiting large numbers of respondents to participate in the research would be a huge project for an individual researcher. Third is the fact that students live and attend universities in contrasting areas. However, while students might have differing habitus according to their socioeconomic and geographical positions, they at least share one common field (Bourdieu, 1991, 2002, cited from Perez Exposito [2013]). In this regard, Chapter 3 has presented a nationwide framework of ideological and political education in Chinese universities, which appears to provide a similar context for university students in China.

4.3.5 Stage one: the quantitative research method

Two stages of empirical data collection were carried out among university students in one university in Beijing. This section describes the two continuous phases for stage one in this study: the questionnaire design and the questionnaire distribution. The conceptual framework introduced in section 4.2 has highlighted the need for research which explores the impact of mass media in facilitating civic participation among university students. In addition, it has also placed particular emphasis on the need for investigating students' general attitudes towards the preconditions for cultural citizenship in the Chinese context.

Informed by the discussion of the literature review, research questions and the conceptual framework, quantitative methods were used to reach the research aims in stage one as follows:

- a. To examine students' attitudes towards their civic experience related to ideological and political education
- b. To examine students' response towards their civic experience under the influence of mass media use
- c. To examine students' general civic commitment and civic knowledge
- d. To investigate students' mass media use, experience and forms of civic participation online and offline.

4.3.5.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was originally developed in English considering for easy academic discussion in the UK universities, and it was later translated into Chinese when distributing the questionnaire. The research results were later presented in English. Efforts have been made in translation to make sure that the meaning is consistent in both language versions. Because it is a self-administrative paper questionnaire for students, a front cover was provided, which included the questionnaire basic information, guides for answering this questionnaire and the researcher's contact details.

Based on the research questions and the theoretical framework discussed earlier, the questionnaire was divided into four sections: demographics; citizenship in curriculum and universities; mass media use; mass media and citizenship. Before the pilot study, the primary version of the questionnaire included 34 questions. Some of them were designed and based on the questionnaires used in the IEA Civic Education Study 1999 (CIVED 1999) (Torney-Purta et al., 1999) and the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2009 (ICCS 2009) (Fraillon & Friedman, 2009), and others were produced by my own design to suit specific situation in the Chinese context. Then this questionnaire version was tested among ten Chinese students in a pilot study. Based on their feedbacks, the number of questions was reduced to 27, and the sequences of several questions were also changed.

The questionnaire was composed by closed requests for answers, particularly using five-point Likert scales items which allowed the assessment of a broad range of affective-behavioural constructs (Kerr et al., 2009). There were also some multiple choices questions exploring respondents' extensive choices of civic learning, and a question asking participants to rank the importance of their choices was included. The format and contents of the applied questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1, and the table in Appendix 2 displays the indicators related to the conceptual framework.

At this stage of preparation for using this instrument of this research, I had to consider ethical issues for the conduct of my research, and had to seek ethical approval from the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee in the University of Glasgow. This approval was obtained before I was able to commence with conducting the empirical research. The reasons for this and the process for obtaining ethics approval is discussed below in section 4.3.8.

4.3.5.2 Questionnaire distribution

The questionnaire for my research was conducted in the sample university during my academic year of 2013-2014, from January 2014 to March 2014. Eligible undergraduate students were selected from two disciplines: arts and science. The targeted respondents were students who were attending my former teacher's class. The hard copies of questionnaires together with the plain language statement (PLS) for the questionnaire (See Appendix 5) were directly distributed to the entire classes by the researcher, and the total number of the distributed questionnaire was 450. The respondents were encouraged to conduct the questionnaire in the last 20 minutes of the classes and return the questionnaire to the researcher. The participants were assured that the questionnaire was nothing to do with their course, and they could fill in the questionnaire voluntarily. 212 copies of the questionnaire were finally collected and so the response rate was 47.1%.

4.3.6 Stage two: the qualitative research method

The conceptual framework also has highlighted the importance of exploring university students' various representations of their civic experience under the influence of mass media and the university citizenship curriculum. As qualitative research is "fundamentally interpretative" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), it is used in stage two with the intention to reveal the depth and the breadth of students' citizenship experience, explain the patterns of civic participation found in the quantitative phase and investigate how civic perceptions are shaped by the university and by society. This section describes the reason for selecting the instrument of interviews for this research, explains the interview design and justifies the interviewee selection process.

4.3.6.1 The interview instrument

Previous qualitative research methods in cultural citizenship research have used systematic examination of online discourses and participants' dairies required by the researcher (See section 3.5). However, those options would consume huge amounts of time. In addition, the conducted questionnaire in stage one could provide much relevant information. Taking those elements into consideration, I chose the research method of conducting interviews in my investigation in stage two.

Interviews are a useful means to get in touch with interviewees' views and meanings of the situation and of their reality (Punch, 1998). Further, qualitative data collected from interviews provides researchers with the insights into things that could not be "seen or heard, for example, the interviewee's inner states" (Seale, 1998, p.202). Therefore, it suits with my intention to develop an interactive situation for data collection, as conducting interviews could encourage students to speak out in their own voices, helping the researcher to understand their roles in society and how they develop political judgments (Starkey et al., 2013).

4.3.6.2 The interview design

As indicated in the explanatory sequential strategy in this mixed methods research, I originally planned to have a full analysis of the quantitative data before commencing the interview procedure. By doing so, the quantitative findings could provide more evidence for the interview contents design and the interviewee recruitment. In other words, the “confirming sampling” strategy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) was considered in the first place to choose interview participants, which was to confirm the preliminary findings, clarify the hypotheses and elaborate on answers to the major research questions. However, due to time constraints in China, I did not strictly conform to this procedure in carrying out the research. The research progressed to the second stage in late March, 2014 shortly after I conducted an initial and brief analysis of the questionnaire data.

In order to provide space for more flexibility in further analysis and cover the possible research areas, I decided to choose in-depth, open-ended, and semi-structured interviews with each participant. Compared with structured interviews and unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews are on the one hand more flexible, and on the other hand they could provide a better comparison between different interviewees based on a settled structure of broad discussion topics (Bryman, 2004). A wide range of discussion topics was proposed, and each individual interviewee was encouraged to elaborate on feelings and civic experiences which were meaningful to them. A list of intended interview questions is exemplified as follows:

Q1: Do you agree that the university curriculum is doing a good job in promoting your citizenship consciousness? If so, why? If not, why not?

Q2: Which aspect of citizenship consciousness (political rights, social rights or moral developments) is emphasized in the current content of the university curriculum?

Q3: What do you think is the most important thing that makes someone a good citizen? Do

you think it is possible for the university curriculum to achieve this for students? Is this echoed in the university environment?

Q4: As the bridge between the university and the wider community, the mass media is embedded into every corner of students' daily lives. How do you view its opportunities and threats in supplementing your citizenship understanding?

Q5: How do you evaluate the status and different roles of the university curriculum and the mass media, when considering their influence for citizenship consciousness?

Q6: If you were asked to propose an agenda for citizenship education in your university, what would you suggest?

Q7: What are your frequent online activities? Could you give some examples?

Q8: If you want to know more about political and social events, what would you normally do? Will you choose a particular type of mass media to follow? Please answer more specifically!

Q9: Do you have an account for social networking? What do you normally do on the social networks?

Q10: Who do you follow regularly on your social networking account? (For example: friends, celebrities, politician, families...)

Q11: Do you pay attention to some political or social topics? What would you do with that kind of information?

Q12: Have you ever attended some social events in person? Can you share your experience with us?

Q13: What motivates you to take part in civic participation in the university or through mass media?

Q14: What would you like to add? (For example, besides the mentioned type of mass media, what else do you think is useful for citizenship development?)

4.3.6.3 Selection of interviewees

Four aspects of students' background characteristics of gender, educational level, educational background, political status were included in the quantitative design, and they are considered to be potentially influential indicators in the relation between mass media and civic participation. Therefore, these four predictor variables were all taken into account for short listing suitable interviewees in the initial design for the qualitative study. The strategy map for selecting interviews is shown as below in Figure 4.5. This sampling strategy indicated the use of the strategy of "maximum variation sampling" (Mertens, 1998), which includes the maximum variation in terms of background characteristics within the sample with the intention to explore extreme cases in different settings as well as to provide explanations for common cases.

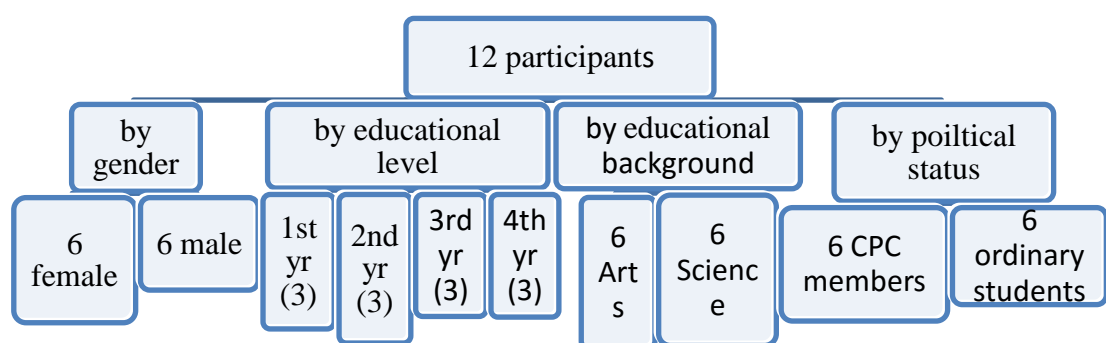


Figure 4. 5: The rationale for selecting interviewees

However, due to time constraints and the availability of participants according to the

further contact emails left in the front cover of the questionnaire, I was unable to identify every single student exactly according to the numbers shown in each category in Figure 4.5. For example, only one student of the fourth year attended interviews, and five students of the third year participated in the research. The probable reason was that during my visit to this university in March, most fourth year students were busy participating in career interviews; thus I found some difficulty in recruiting the fourth year students. In this sense, the selecting principle serves only as a guide for identifying suitable participants in interviews. Finally, twelve participants took part in the interviews.

4.3.6.4 The interview process

Emails were sent to recruit eligible interview candidates, and some students who had participated in the questionnaire replied and attended. Moreover, some students were recruited through a “snowballing” strategy: some participants recommended their friends, and a few students contacted me expressing their willingness to participate in this study.

Interviews were conducted at a pre-arranged time and place in Beijing to suit the time schedule of participants, and each interview lasted for about thirty minutes. Each participant was provided with a copy of the information sheet (See Appendix 6) and consent form (See Appendix 7) before conducting interviews. In compliance with ethical approval that had been obtained, they were informed of the purpose of my study and the possible area of questions I was going to ask. Participants were asked for their permission to use a voice recorder at the interview, and they were assured that their participation was completely voluntary and they would be free to withdraw at any time during the interview process. The interviews were conducted in Chinese, and the transcriptions were also processed in Chinese. The contents were later translated into English when presenting the results.

The interviews took the form of semi-structure, in which the researchers asked certain questions from the list of questions before hand. However, the questions varied in some degree according to the responses from the interviewees. For example, one of the

participants struggled to understand citizenship consciousness in the Chinese context, and she denied the existence of citizenship education in China. Efforts were made to encourage her to talk about daily activities and experiences to seek the potential for citizenship understanding. Participants were offered more autonomy to share and express their understanding. Therefore, interviews were more like a flexible conversation and dialogue, and are definitely not in the “ask – and – answer” style. Thus the interview process in this study reflects my efforts to create a conversational environment where both parties are equal based on Ellis and Berger’s (2003) approach of a reflexive interviewing.

4.3.7 Data management and analysis procedure

There has been some discussion over how to conduct data analysis in mixed methods research. It is important to have a clear plan of how to analyse and merge the quantitative and qualitative data collected from separate research stages. It is not simply to intersect numbers and data, but rather the most challenging task is to figure out appropriate ways to present quantitative and qualitative data in a coherent way (Bzaeley, 2010). One proposed strategy is to integrate the results of the quantitative and qualitative phases when discussing the outcomes of an entire study (Creswell, 2003).

The data analysis in this study correspondingly took the form of the explanatory design analysis based on the model of the explanatory sequential design. There are normally four ways to combine quantitative and qualitative data within the explanatory design analysis. A popular approach is to first collect the quantitative data, and then to look for extreme cases or detailed information to follow up in the qualitative stage. The main purpose of conducting the qualitative data is to explore more information about existing special cases (Caracelli & Greene, 1993). According to the second approach, different types of factors are first discovered through the quantitative data analysis, and they are then used as a typology to identify themes in the qualitative data (Caracelli & Greene, 1993). The third way is first to compare variables between two or more groups using quantitative methods, and then to conduct qualitative interviews to explore the reasons contributing to the differences. The last approach can be termed as “examining multi-levels”, which means

that quantitative and qualitative data are collected in different levels. For instance, one is at the universal level, while the other is at the district level. The information from each level then is to be compared and develops into the next level (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The first two approaches of data analysis were employed in my study. The general situation of the quantitative dataset was first analysed using the SPSS software and the qualitative data was explored for more information and explanation for those detected cases. For example, it was found in the quantitative data that the social network is positively related with participants' civic participation, and then more specific civic experience with social networks and their motivation was explored in the interviews.

After solving the problem of how to combine the quantitative and qualitative data, it is essential to have a comprehensive plan and procedure to analyse each dataset. The analysing techniques of both datasets are generally introduced in the following parts.

4.3.7.1 Questionnaire data analysis

Three interrelated steps were included in my process of analysing the questionnaire data: preparing the data for analysis, the data analysis procedure and interpreting the analysis results (Creswell, 2010). The program of IBM SPSS Statistics 20 was employed for the quantitative data analysis. The whole procedure in my study is explained as follows:

In the preparation stage, the data was first scored for future analysis. This procedure operated thus: a numeric score or value was assigned to each response category for each question. For instance, as to the question of "what is your political status", I assigned numbers such as 1= Member of Chinese Communist Party, 2=Member of the Communist Youth League of China, 3=Unaffiliated and 4=Confidential. In addition, as to the questions checking students' responses to a statement, scores were assigned as 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree and 5= strongly agree. After the software of SPSS was installed into my computer, the main task was to convert the raw paper data into the electronic version in the SPSS program. Before it progressed to the real

analysis stage, the data was cleaned to see whether there was any error. The missing data for some questions were noticed when I was imputing the data. The questionnaires with missing data were then discarded and the original questionnaires were immediately destroyed by a paper shredder machine. Huge time and efforts were spent to finish this preparation stage, as there were large numbers of the sample and particular questions in the questionnaire in this research.

Another task in this preparation stage was to test the reliability of certain variables. According to the theoretical framework depicted earlier, some variables need to be summated for the quantitative analysis, such as variables of teaching methods, learning outcomes, campus activities, social trust, online activities, broader civic participation, political participation, civic commitment, and students' general attitudes. Thus the term Cronbach's Alpha is introduced. Santos (1999) suggested that Cronbach's Alpha (1951) should be applied in research studies with the intention to assess and improve the reliability of variables which are derived from summated scales for further analysis need. In addition, Nunnally (1978) indicated that a satisfactory Cronbach's Alpha value should be above 0.7. However, it is also acceptable if it is just above 0.6. Table 4.1 below in the following page reported the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha coefficient) of summated variables in my study, and the results showed that all Cronbach's Alpha values are larger than 0.6, which are ranging from 0.753 to 0.926. Therefore, it can be concluded that the summated variables in this research are of a relatively high consistency, thus indicating all items can be kept in the later data analysis procedure.

The second stage was to analyse the input data using the instruments in SPSS with the intention to provide evidence for addressing my research questions. Two analysis approaches of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used in the analysis procedure, and the decision of employing which type of analysis was made according to the design of variables in research questions.

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Teaching methods	.894	7
Campus activities	.876	7
trust	.872	5
Online activities	.926	11
Learning outcomes	.876	9
Political participation	.855	2
Broader Civic participation	.753	4
Civic commitments	.855	3
Attitude towards university curriculum	.884	5
Attitude towards mass media	.878	5

Table 4. 1: The Cronbach's Alpha values of summated variables in this research

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics indicate the general tendency of a single variable and report its mean, mode and the spread of scores (standard deviation and range). The mode is the score which appears most frequently in a list of scores. The tools of counts and percentages are generally used for categorical variables. For example, the tool of descriptive statistic was employed to obtain a general picture of participants' background information. Besides that, the frequency analysis was used in examining participants' perceptions. For instance, to analyse the question of "are students satisfied with the university curriculum for citizenship values and practices", the frequency analysis of students' learning outcomes was used to indicate the general tendency among the sample.

Inferential analysis

Inferential analysis is introduced when comparing groups or relating two or more variables. In order to test the proposed potential relations, different types of inferential statistics were used. The techniques of one sample T-test, ordinal multiple regression and one-way ANOVA test were mainly employed in this process.

One sample T- test is a statistical procedure used to examine the mean difference between the sample and the known value of a population mean. Therefore, it was used to examine differences in civic participation among different groups such as females and males; party members and non-party member students. In addition, this technique was also used to show the differences between the means of participants' attitudes towards the university curriculum and mass media. Another tool is regression analysis, which is employed to identify the casual relationship at work among variables revealed from the literature. For instance, regression analysis was performed within a range of variables such as forms of online participation and offline participation, and mass media use. One-way ANOVA test is conducted in order to test whether there is statistically significant difference between the groups. For instance, it was used to test statistically the difference in civic intention between males and females.

In the third stage, it is the turn to report my results using the tables and figures obtained from the testing stage. The analysis results were presented according to each research question one by one in order. When presenting the results, numbers in each table and figure were carefully explained, and the results were interpreted based on SPSS knowledge. A more detailed explanation of these statistical procedures is presented in Chapter Five.

4.3.7.2 Interview data analysis

The interview data was analysed in stage two. Considering the fact that it is a comparatively small qualitative database collected from 12 interviewees, software such as NVivo was not employed in this research, as it is more suitable for large amounts of data. Rather I used the method of hand analysis, which could easily keep track of the comparatively small database in my research.

It is important to mention that the structure of the qualitative data analysis was oriented by the main results from the quantitative data analysis in stage one; therefore, the main analysing task in this stage is to find relevant information which could serve as a supplement to explaining the quantitative findings. In addition, some new findings which

seemed relevant to the research aims were also explored. For instance, participants' understanding of citizenship, civic participation and their motivation for civic participation was further explored.

The first step is to transcribe the interview data. Transcription indeed is a sophisticated procedure, where oral discourses by audio tapes need to be transcribed accurately into written languages (Miller & Carbtree, 2004, p.200). The difficult situation encountered with me is how to retrieve important and useful information. Miles and Huberman (1994) point out that if you do not know what matters more, everything matters. As the main purpose and contents of interviews were firstly set out, it seemed not so difficult to target the required information from the participants. In this connection, my procedure was consistent with the central principle of qualitative data analysis, which is that a researcher simultaneously engages in data collection and data analysis (Dey, 1999; Charmaz, 2004). By doing so, the problems of collecting unfocused and unlimited data can be avoided.

The analysis stage began after transcribing the data. The most realistic aspect of qualitative analysis is that it deals with words, which are flexible with multiple meanings (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.56). In addition, the discourses are conditionally appropriated by the participants, operated through their specific linguistic and non-linguistic practices, and communicated to the researcher within a particular genre (Fairclough, 2003, 2009). Therefore, it is important to examine the data on different levels: literal, interpretative and reflexive (Mason, 1998). The four stages of qualitative data analysis proposed by Charmaz (2004), which are line by line coding, focused coding, memo writing and theoretical sampling, were adopted in this study (Charmaz, 2004, p.506-516). The whole process was explained as follows accompanied with an illustration in this research.

Line by Line coding

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define the process of "line by line coding" as familiarizing oneself with the data. Questions could be asked by the researcher such as "what is going on" and "what factors are involved here?" The main task in this stage is not to analyse the

meaning, but to describe the contents within the data as well as to define its category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.119-120). An example of line by line coding in my research is provided below in Table 4.2. The participant provided the answer to the interview question: what is the most important thing for making a good citizen? As the table 4.2 below demonstrated, I highlighted the key points from the answer. After looking through the answers from other participants, there would literally come out a list of expected qualities of a good citizen and it is kept for further analysis.

1	I think as a citizen, he should serve the society , and contribute to the society. in addition,
2	He needs to be responsible for the society. Another important thing is that he should also
3	Concentrate on its individual affairs , which means that he should be responsible for his
4	Own duty . In other words, he should have a right understanding of the relation between
5	Himself and the society .

Table 4. 2: An example of line by line coding

Focused coding

The second level of analysis is introduced which examines potential connections and relationships between those emerged categories from line by line coding. Some key types of relationship include causal relationships, rationalization, supporting links and oppositional links (Dey, 1993). Under the guideline of focused coding, the links between two questions were explored. For instance, a first relational aspect appeared when I continued to ask the question: “how is this aspect expressed in the university curriculum and university campus?” Then I continued to code the answers to this question which is illustrated in Table 4.3 below.

The answers for these two questions illustrated in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 offered a thinking perspective to find out the relation between certain citizenship values and university curriculum’s potential for achieving this. Here the analysis was concerned with the pro and cons of the university curriculum for the fulfilment of becoming a good citizen.

In addition, it also enabled me to explore why this situation was engendered.

1	I personally think it is difficult to achieve through university curriculum. Students always
2	Drop out of the relevant lessons like “Liang ke”. One reason is that citizenship education
3	Is organized loosely , and few students pay attention to this course. Moreover, students
4	Tend to pay attention to their employment skills for future career, therefore, some citizenship
5	Values like responsibility are not emphasized.

Table 4. 3: An example of focused coding

Memo writing

Memo writing provides a mechanism to elaborate the processes, assumptions and actions that are subsumed under the code (Charmaz, 2004, p.511). Normally this step is easily done with a computer program, where a memo link attached to the relevant content could be established, and it is easy for researchers to enter and make instant comments on emerging themes. As hand analysis was chosen in my research, my way of memo writing began as the line by line coding, using red bold words to indicate their potential implications for new themes.

Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling is a more selective process, which focuses on certain aspects and meanings to enhance the process of explaining the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2004). It is a useful tool for further clarification of data by looking for differences from other strands of data or gaps between what has been concluded in a literature review (Charmaz 2004, p.514). In addition, the search for some extreme cases would also develop existing theories because participants may deny the appropriateness of analysed quantitative data (Kemshall, 1998). The emerging themes and information collected from the twelve interviews was further compared with the themes or categories found in the quantitative data analysis and the previous literature review.

4.3.8 Consideration of potential ethical issues

The ethical approach should always be considered in social science research, and so attention was paid to ethical considerations during my empirical research. The interpretivist paradigm of qualitative research in this mixed methods research can exhibit particular and challenging ethical issues, because participants' values are included in the whole process of research (Bouma, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 2004, p. 33; Tolich & Davidson, 1999).

The question proposed by Denscombe (2002, p.174) provides a clear indication of essential contents of ethical research: "Have the rights and interests of those affected by the research been taken into consideration?" It demonstrates that there are generally two dimensions in ethical consideration when conducting empirical research. On the one hand, it deals with researchers' values, research motivation and research aims; on the other hand, it also concerns how to protect involved participants' rights under relevant ethical rules. Conforming to ethical rules will help researchers reach their primary research purposes, and meanwhile participants' rights can be protected.

4.3.8.1 The researcher's position and values in this study

It is widely agreed that social science research is value-laden rather than value-free (Bryman, 2001; Janesick, 1998; Kelly et al., 1992). DeSouza (2004) suggests that research is incomplete until researchers' roles in conducting research have been explored. Understanding one's place in research studies aids reflexivity and helps to "develop an awareness of how [one's] presence affects not just the outcomes of the research but the process as well" (DeSouza, 2004, p.473). The research subjects in this study are university students in China, who are grouped as young people or youth in the literature, and I recognize that my values and understanding of young people would exert influence on my research design, data collection and data analysis.

The ethical issues related to including children in research studies can be frequently found

in debates about their levels of understanding of research topics (West, 1999), sensitive disclosure of the contents from interviews (Michell, 1999) and the issues of child protection (Masson, 2000). The situation of children can be transferable to our understanding of young people in society. France (2009) mentioned the difficulty in understanding the situation of young people. In particular, researches often come to their study with subjectivity and bias for the subjects, the research environment and how they see the world (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Research about young people overwhelmingly reveals the passive and negative images that can be formed among young people. Therefore, research investigation needs to be undertaken with an open mind and voices must be given to participants. When this consideration is applied into the methodological approach, the rights of participants should be taken into account. Alderson (2004) has carefully summarized three levels of involvement of young people in empirical research. The first level is unknowing objects of research, which means that participants have limited ideas of research aims and limited rights in the research process. The second level is characterized by increased participatory rights. They become aware of and have some understanding of research aims. The third level is active participants. In this level, participants take an active role in methodology design, delivery and evaluation. It is not scientific to divide these three levels separately. Rather it is more realistic to view them as a continuum, with certain degrees of involvement within each level.

In the case of my study, a critical perspective towards young people's roles in different stages needs to be established. In the research method of the questionnaire, the researcher aims to answer research questions and find general choices and inclination towards the university curriculum and mass media among young people. Thus the researcher led this part of the research, and the participants were invited to contribute their knowledge and experience in this area. It can be seen as a limited degree of participation. Rather, in the stage of interviews, young people were given autonomous rights to participate (Lloyd-Smith & Tarr, 2000), and they were shaping the main contents of the inquiry. My strategy was to constantly reflect on the role I played in the data collection.

4.3.8.2 Ethical standards for participants

An ethical application form (See Appendix 3) was submitted to the College of Social Science Ethic Committee in the University of Glasgow in October, 2013. The form included detailed information of this study: such as research purposes, the statement of research procedure and data protection. Besides the application form, the questionnaire in its English version, interview themes, Plain Language Statement (PLS) for each method and the consent form for interviews were attached for further reference. In addition, the consent letter for empirical research in this sample university was submitted, which was obtained from my former teacher.

Ethical approval (See Appendix 4) was granted in November, 2013, and then I took the research forth in China. The standards of ethical rules are consistent with Data Protection Action (1998) and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) act 2002. The applied ethical standards have guided the following steps of my research, and they are informed consent; confidentiality; health, safety and security.

Informed consent

Cohen et al. (2002) have defined the ethical code of informed consent from four aspects: competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension. In order to conform to the code of competence, a cover letter with information of the questionnaire was accompanied with the questionnaire when distributing to the participants. In addition, when conducting interviews, the participants were given time to read the PLS to know the relevant information. As the research sample is university students, the wording in the PLS is not formal to allow for easy understanding. Both PLSs for the questionnaire and interviews are presented in Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 respectively.

As to the voluntarism code, Denscombe (2002, p.184) explained it like this: the agreement to participate should be voluntary, and free from coercion and undue influence. Although the questionnaire was distributed by a university teacher in his class, it was not a

compulsory task for students. It was absolutely not included in teaching assessments. No individuals were forced to complete this questionnaire, which could be seen from the response rate. As to the interviews, the original respondents were asked to leave their further contact emails if they agreed to participate in further research. The written consent forms from interviewees were obtained as the proof of their agreements. In addition, in the interview process, participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the interview questions.

Confidentiality

The ethical code of confidentiality needs to be emphasized in every stage in the research process, from collecting data, analysing data and disseminating research results. This code was first explained to the participants before they decided to contribute. All the original questionnaires, interview notes and transcripts, consent forms and other relevant documents were stored in a separate and locked cabinet which can be only accessed by the researcher. At a later date, some of the respondents were contacted to conduct interviews by their email addresses left on the front page of the questionnaire. The front page was first coded, and removed in order to maintain anonymity. Only the researcher has the access to the information and it was kept securely and separately from the other parts of the questionnaires. When the data was coded and stored by the SPSS software in a personal computer, it was locked by a personal password. Any paper questionnaires and data would be destroyed by a paper shredder machine at the end of 2016. Participants were informed that analysed results would be used for research purposes and all participants in interviews were coded with sequential numbers. The citations of their responses used in the final dissertation was marked as a combination of numbers, sexual and major such as 05, F, A (where F represents female and A represents arts).

Health, safety and security

It is another important ethical code when conducting empirical research. As the subjects in this research are young people above 18 years old, in addition, they are mainly invited to complete the questionnaire and the interview, the potential risk for health, safety and

security is minimal. However, the researcher provided sufficient supports to reduce harm or stress among the participants, including providing contract details and timely communication.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has provided the conceptual framework and the research methodology employed in this study with the intention to give an overview of how the empirical research was conducted under the rationale of cultural citizenship. The following two chapters will separately move on to present findings from both sets of data.

Chapter Five Findings from the questionnaire data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents general findings which are related to the auxiliary research questions proposed in Chapter 1 based on a statistical analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire. The findings mainly take the forms of tables, bar charts and figures generated by SPSS. The presentation includes following parts:

- basic descriptive characteristics of the respondent profiles
- the participants' views on citizenship experienced in the university curriculum
- the participants' views on citizenship experienced through mass media
- the participants' expressed civic commitment
- the representation of participants' mass media use, and the use of mass media to support their political and broader civic participation offline
- the possible relationship between mass media use and civic participation
- the mediating effect of background characteristics

A conclusion then follows which summarizes the key findings derived from the quantitative data. The key findings will be used to invoke qualitative data analysis of stage two, and also to support the overall research conclusions.

5.2 Basic descriptive characteristics of the respondent profiles

This section describes the participants' demographics, including their gender, places of residence, educational level, educational background, political status and reported sense of political interest. It provides a broad picture of "who the participants are" in this research.

Table 5.1 shows that slightly more female students (119, 56.1%) than male students (93, 43.9%) took part in the questionnaire. Compared to the gender ratio of the population of college students in the whole country in 2009 (Male: Female =51.11%: 48.89%)²⁹, the

²⁹ See China Education Statistics. (2011). National statistics of higher education [Electronic Version].

result of the sample ratio shows that the difference is significant and this sample contains more female students. Therefore, this result is inclined to the former research finding that women are more likely to attend voluntary activities (Deviren & Babb, 2005). Table 5.2 shows that the majority of the participants come from towns and villages in China, while only 28.3% of them come from cities.

Table 5. 1: Gender of participants (n=212)

Gender	Participants	Valid percentage
Male	93	43.9
Female	119	56.1

Table 5. 2: Place of residence of participants (n=212)

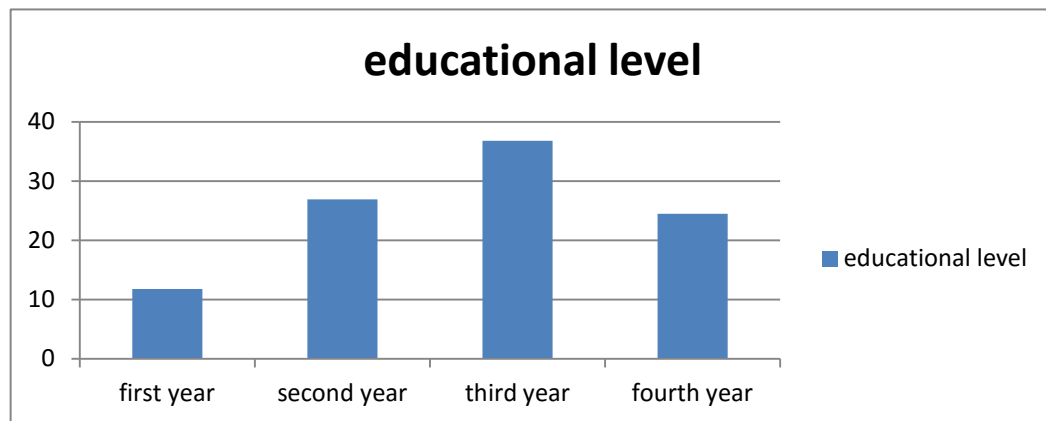
Place of residence	Participants	Valid percentage
City	60	28.3%
Town	70	33.0%
Village	82	38.6%

As to the item of the educational level, Figure 5.1 below shows that first year students (11.8%) comparatively contributed the least to this questionnaire, whereas students in their third year (36.8%) contributed the most. However, Table 5.3 below shows that there is a relatively balanced response from participants of different majors. 48.1% of the participants major in arts and 51.9% of them major in science.

Table 5. 3: Educational background of participants (n=212)

Educational background	Participants	Valid percentage
Science	110	51.9
Arts	102	48.1

Figure 5. 1: Educational level of participants (n=212)



The next demographic item is students' political status. Table 5.4 shows that of the 212 respondents, 98% provided information about their political status. Of these, 55.7% (118) are members of the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC), which occupies the largest percentage of all valid respondents. The rest of the respondents include 37.7% (80) Party members and 4.7% (10) non-Party members. The result is consistent with the situation introduced in Chapter 3 that almost all students joined the CYLC, and further analysis would be based on the separation of Party members and CYLC members when it comes to the influence of the political status among the participants.

Table 5. 4: Political status of participants (n=212)

Political status	Participants	Valid percentage
Member of Chinese Communist Party	80	37.7%
Member of the Communist Youth League of China	118	55.7%
Ordinary students	10	4.7%
Confidential	4	1.9%

The last investigated characteristic background is respondents' interests in following political and social news. The one sample T-test in Table 5.5 shows that the average

interest score among respondents is 3.86. In addition, the standard deviation was 0.902 and less than 1, which indicates a small fluctuation of political interest in this research sample. Table 5.6 shows that less than 5% of the sample students reported their low interest in political and social news, whereas 65.1% of participants (138) reported high interests above the middle level of 3. Therefore, it could be inferred that respondents in this study have strong as well as steady interests in getting in touch with political and social affairs.

Table 5. 5: One-sample statistics of reported political interests of participants (n=212)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Level of interest	212	3.86	.902	.062

Table 5. 6: Political interest of participants (n=212)

Level of interest	Participants	Valid percentages
1	3	1.4%
2	7	3.3%
3	64	30.2%
4	81	38.2%
5	57	26.9%

5.3 Factor analysis: the participants' views on citizenship as experienced in the university curriculum

This section gives a snapshot of students' civic experience under the university citizenship curriculum. The general results are presented with the intention to answer the 1st auxiliary research question: within university students' attitudes towards university citizenship curricula, how do they view their civic experience that is prompted by the curriculum in their universities? The first theoretical framework in Chapter 4 has proposed six aspects related to the citizenship curriculum, and these aspects are accordingly examined

5.3.1 Received learning outcomes

According to the 12th question in the questionnaire, participants were given nine aspects of intended citizenship learning outcomes (ICL), and they were required to report on whether they have received relevant civic knowledge from ideological and political education.

These intended citizenship learning outcomes are constructed around the national, social and personal dimensions of citizenship understanding.

Table 5.7 below shows that all aspects of intended citizenship learning outcomes except for ICL1 and ICL3 are moderately experienced by the participants, with larger percentage above the middle level of 3. Specifically, more than 50% of the respondents (52.4%, 54.3%, 57.1%, 58.1%, 55.2%, 60.4% and 52.8% respectively) expressed that they have learnt quite a lot or a great deal of the other seven aspects of citizenship knowledge. This indicates that participants have shown certain confidence in learning civic knowledge from ideological and political education. Looking deeply into the specific numbers, it is easy to find that students are more confident in their personal dimension of citizenship understanding. For instance, most of the participants claimed that they have learned a lot about fostering qualities such as confidence, responsibility and cooperation.

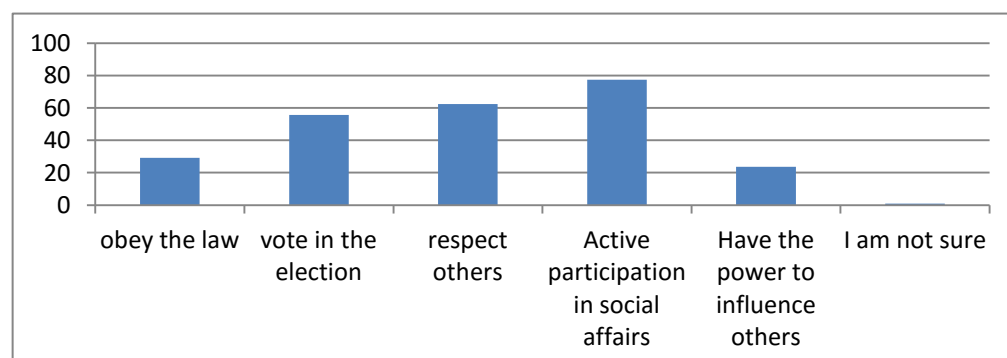
Table 5. 7: How do the participants view their received civic knowledge from ideological and political education? (n=212)

	none	Not a lot	A little	Quite a lot	A great deal
ICL1:To foster patriotism, socialist moralities and values	3.3	12.3	40.1	25.5	18.9
ICL2:To concern about the gap between the rich and the poor	0.9	17.0	29.7	38.7	13.7
ICL3: To participate in national political life and social affairs	15.1	61.8	9.0	9.0	5.2
ICL4: To connect what is learnt in courses with experiences in wider society	1.9	9.0	34.9	37.3	17.0
ICL 5: To have confidence in myself and life.	2.8	9.0	31.1	40.1	17.0
ICL 6: To behave responsibly	1.4	11.3	29.2	37.3	20.8
ICL 7: To respect others	1.4	12.3	31.1	29.7	25.5
ICL 8: To cooperate with others	1.9	8.0	29.7	37.3	23.1
ICL9: Critical thinking: to question the content in mass media	2.8	9.0	35.4	33.5	19.3

However, notably, a largest percentage of 61.8% among the participants expressed that they have learnt little of participating in national political life and social affairs. In addition, 15.1% reported no relevant learning experience for this aspect. Therefore, it can be seen that this is the least frequently learnt by the participants. Another result is that more than half of participants (55.7%) showed their inadequate ability to foster patriotism, socialist moralities and values through ideological and political education. This finding is inconsistent with a previous research result that an overwhelming majority of students (92.4%) expressed their loyalty towards the nation in Tu (2011)'s study. Rather, this research shows that only 45% of the participants have developed certain qualities as good citizens. Compared with the dominant status of ideological and political education as well as the emphasized patriotism education described in Chapter 3, this indicates the challenges already proposed towards the intended aims of this curriculum among university students.

Participants were asked to choose the most important thing in citizenship learning for making a good citizen. The bar chart in Figure 5.2 shows that almost all of the participants have a clear mind of what makes a good citizen, as the percentage of choosing "I am not sure" is extremely small (1%). Among the other options, the percentage of "active participation in social affairs" is the largest, which indicates that the participants generally acknowledged the importance of civic participation. The qualities of "respect others" and "vote in election" both have percentages above 50%. In addition, the other two "obey the law" and "have the power to influence others" receive comparatively less consideration at about 30% level.

Figure 5. 2: What is the essential quality for making a good citizen?



5.3.2 Teaching methods

Table 5.8 below shows the occurring frequencies of teaching methods (TM) which are commonly employed in citizenship teaching. It is important to mention at first that the listed seven types of teaching methods are all experienced by the participants in the university curriculum, but with an unbalanced and different occurrence.

The most frequent teaching method experienced by the participants is “summarizing important points of textbooks for memorizing”, for its percentage of “fairly often” is 45.3% and “very often” is 25.5%, which means that more than 70% of the participants reported their extensive experience with this teaching method. The second frequent experienced is “preparing and reading through teaching PowerPoint”, as it shows that 39.2% of the participants reported the scale of “fairly often” and 24.1% reported the scale of “very often”. Therefore, it is indicated that the notion of “citizenship-as-achievements” mentioned in Chapter Two could reflect the situation of citizenship teaching in the Chinese context

However, it is reassuring to find that the teaching methods of “connecting teaching contents with wider society”, “encouraging students to take responsibility for projects and disagreement” and “using media” are also comparatively fairly often used, with the percentages of 36.8%, 36.3% and 31.6% respectively. Therefore, it is revealed that flexible teaching methods have already been used in ideological and political education, and students are encouraged to have such civic experience as project development and discussion in this curriculum.

Table 5. 8: What's the frequency of experiencing different citizenship teaching methods?

	never	Not often	sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
TM1: Encouraging students to express different ideas	15.1	40.1	19.3	16.0	9.4
TM2:Organizing discussion groups	11.3	42.0	16.5	20.3	9.9
TM3:Preparing and reading through teaching PPT	2.4	11.8	22.6	39.2	24.1
TM4:Connecting teaching contents with wider world	1.9	9.9	37.7	36.8	13.7
TM5:Encouraging students to take responsibility for projects and disagreements	3.0	12.3	33.0	36.3	15.1
TM6:Summarizing important points of textbooks for memorizing	5.2	9.4	14.6	45.3	25.5
TM7: Using media(video or websites)	5.2	7.5	36.3	36.8	14.2

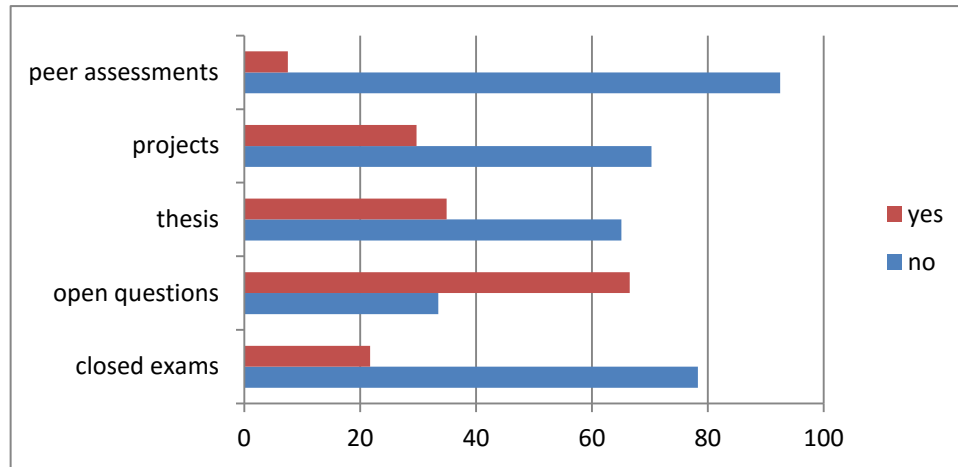
It is obvious to notice that the teaching methods of “encouraging students to express different ideas” and of “organizing discussion groups” are the least frequently employed in the curriculum, as they both demonstrate over 50% on the scale of “not often” and “never” altogether. This indicates that the participants received little supports for expressing different ideas and free discussion in ideological and political education.

5.3.3 Assessment methods

Figure 5.3 below shows the percentages of participants reporting their experience with particular assessment methods. It is noticeable that assigning open questions is the most frequent assessment method, as more than 60% of the participants reported their experience. Thesis and project designs are also used in the assessment, with a relatively smaller percentage of about 40%. On the contrary, closed exams are not commonly employed in assessing students' citizenship learning outcomes, as almost 80% of the participants provided the “no” answer. Accordingly, it is indicated that although rigid teaching methods are frequently employed by teachers (See section 5.3.2), flexible assessment methods are commonly used among students. In addition, it is also observed that more than 95% reported no experience of the assessment method of peer assessment,

thus indicating that this kind of assessment method, characterized by personal interaction and communication, is rarely used in the citizenship curriculum in this university.

Figure 5. 3: The frequency of assessment methods

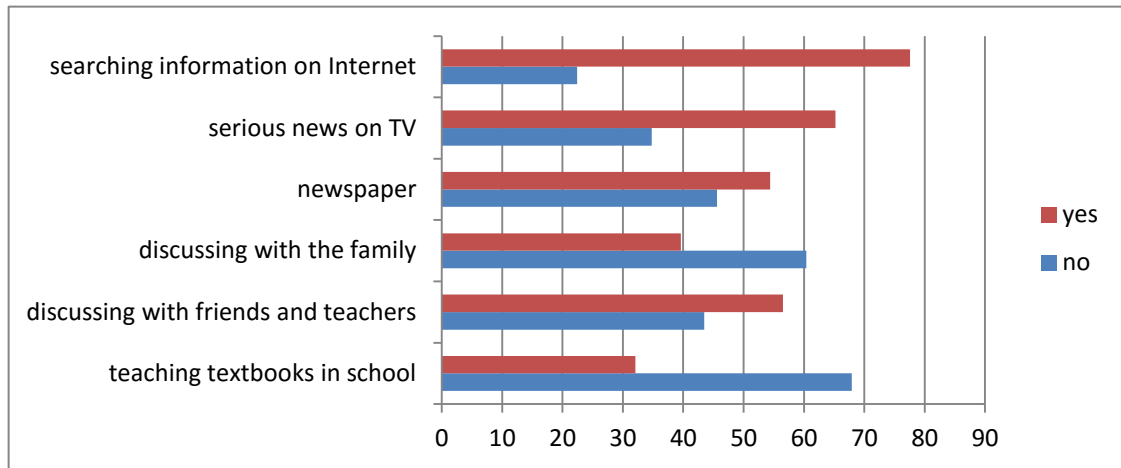


5.3.4 Preferred learning methods

Participants were asked about their learning choices among various options of civic learning: teaching textbooks in schools, discussing with friends and teachers, discussing with the family, newspapers, serious news on TV and searching for information on the Internet. They were encouraged to tick more than one option if relevant.

Figure 5.4 shows that only 32.1% of the participants reported a preference for using official textbooks of ideological and political education. In addition, 40% of the respondents expressed they would discuss civic issues with their family. On the contrary, more than half of the participants received relevant citizenship knowledge from discussing with teachers and friends as well as the mass media such as newspapers, serious news on TV and the Internet. Therefore, it is indicated that the citizenship curriculum in universities is not viewed as a strong aspect for citizenship learning among the participants, while the participants are looking for other areas for more knowledge.

Figure 5. 4: Participants' citizenship learning choices



When respondents were further asked to rank those learning choices with the intention to examine which source of citizenship learning is heavily relied on, about 33.6% of the participants chose the Internet at the first place, which is higher than that of choosing teaching textbooks at 29.4% and discussing with friends and teachers at 28%. This means that more students would prefer to receive civic information from the Internet. Interestingly, when looking at the percentage of the second place, it is still the Internet with the percentage of 45.2%. Almost 30% of the sample ranked serious TV news at the third place, which outnumbers other sources' percentages of their rank status. Therefore, the results here reveal that the mass media is attracting students most when they want to know more about citizenship issues. However, it is still worthy to mention that participants do not discard the use of official textbooks totally, as 29.4% of them would like to turn to it for help in their first choice.

5.3.5 Opportunities for civic participation

The participants were given a list of 7 types of potential civic activities, and were asked to report the degree to which they have been encouraged to take part in those activities by the university. The first two activities are in the domain of political participation (Cronbach's Alpha=.855, see section 4.3.7.1) and the remaining five are in the domain of broader civic participation (Cronbach's Alpha=.753, see section 4.3.7.1).

Calculating mean and mode is used to get a direct image of the frequencies of civic activities. Table 5.9 below shows that the modes of activities of “voting in national-level elections”, “getting in touch with governmental officials” and “taking part in public events designed to raise awareness of equality and justice” are 2, below the average level, indicating that the largest number of the participants felt that they are not encouraged to take part in these activities. In addition, the means of the first two civic activities are highly low, indicating that the majority of the participants did not often get involved in political participation. However, the modes of activities of “voting in student union election”, “joining a community and voluntary organization” and “donating money to poor people” are all of 4, showing that these activities are highly encouraged among the participants.

Table 5. 9: Means and modes of the frequency of taking part in civic activities (n=212)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mean	2.0330	2.4481	3.4811	3.0189	3.5802	3.7783	3.4104
Mode	2.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	3.00

Percentages of each scale of those civic activities are further examined with the intention to provide a more detailed map. Table 5.10 shows that the same result is found such that voting in national- level elections, taking part in public events and getting in touch with governmental officials are least encouraged. Specifically, more than 75% of the participants reported little experience with contacting with governmental officials. In addition, less than 50% of the participants felt that they are encouraged to vote in nation-level elections. On the contrary, donating money to poor people is the most popular activity, as more than 80% of the participants felt they are motivated to get involved in this activity. What is more, students are more likely to be encouraged to join a community voluntary organization, as more than 80% of them reported this experience. Therefore, it can be seen that a promising condition for broader civic participation could probably exist among students.

Table 5. 10: Frequency of participants' taking part in civic activities

	never	Not often	sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
1:vote in national-level elections	23.1%	38.2%	16.5%	15.1%	7.1%
2:Get in touch with governmental officials	34.9%	40.6%	14.2%	7.1%	3.3%
3:Vote in student union elections	8.0%	14.6%	17.0%	42.0%	18.4%
4:Take part in public events designed to raise awareness of equality and justice	6.6%	35.8%	27.4%	17.5%	12.3%
5: Join a community or voluntary organization	2.8%	15.1%	16.0%	53.3%	12.7%
6:Donate money to poor people	2.8%	15.6%	9.9%	44.3%	27.4%
7: Group discussion and communication	2.8%	14.2%	37.3%	30.7%	15.1%

5.3.6 Support received for citizenship learning

The research has made some efforts to investigate students' expected citizenship learning situation. Its aim is not to provide a detailed and comprehensive blueprint for curriculum reforms in Chinese Universities, which is beyond the scope of this research. Rather, it aims to provide a direction to consider citizenship teaching from students' perspectives.

Table 5.11 shows that the mean for each statement is above the middle level of 3, indicating that most participants generally agreed with those statements. Therefore it demonstrates that the participants are expecting more improvements in ideological and political education concerning its learning contents and teaching methods. In addition, their pursuits for civic participation supports are clearly observed, as most participants expressed the expectation that the curriculum needs to be more related to daily lives and offer them opportunities to get involved in social activities.

Interestingly, the mode of "I would like to gain more understanding of social mass media in classes" is 3, indicating that the largest number of the participants expressed their neutral attitudes towards understanding the mass media. However, the results show that its mean is relatively high at above 3, indicating the average inclination to know more about mass media among the participants. This result may be produced by a dichotomy of

attitudes existing among students. While some participants enthusiastically chose the measurement of 4 or 5, more participants chose the answer of “neither agree nor disagree”, meaning that while some of the students are cautious about the role of mass media, some students are greatly impressed by the potential influence of mass media for citizenship learning.

Table 5. 11: Modes and means of participants’ agreement on their expected citizenship learning

	mode	mean
I would like to learn more about political knowledge like Chinese political system and election system	4	3.52
I would like to learn more about Chinese traditional culture	4	3.50
I would like to have practice opportunities in class and at campus	4	3.56
I would like to learn how to get involved in social activities.	4	3.66
I would like to know more about social issues like inequality and poverty	4	3.65
I would like to gain more understanding of social mass media in classes	3	3.59
I would like school citizenship education to be more linked with daily life	4	3.68

5.3.7 Students’ general attitudes towards ideological and political education

I further constructed five indices based on the above six different aspects with the intention to measure participants’ overall attitudes towards citizenship learning from ideological and political education. Each index shows the distribution of participants’ responses into a 1-5 scale, where 1 signifies “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree”. The analyzing technique of one sample T-test is used, and Table 5.12 presents a comparison between the means of the five indices.

The result output in Table 5.12 below shows that the mean score of each index is slightly higher than the mid-point 3 ranging from 3.43-3.55 at $P < 0.01$. This indicates that the participants do not hold a completely negative attitude towards the university curriculum; rather they are on the way to forming some positive attitudes, however, it is not yet developed completely. The means of these two statements of “I have received enough supports in schools to put citizenship into practices” and “school education has been able to provide useful answers to my questions about citizenship” are the lowest, therefore, the statistically significant differences between means show that the participants generally are

unsatisfied with the university curriculum for its inability to provide citizenship practice opportunities.

Table 5. 12: One-Sample Test: general attitudes towards the university curriculum

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
My knowledge of citizenship mainly comes from school education	53.081	212	.000	3.53774	3.4064	3.6691
I have received enough support in schools to put citizenship into practices	48.571	212	.000	3.43868	3.2991	3.5782
School education has been able to provide useful answers to my questions about citizenship	51.091	212	.000	3.43396	3.3015	3.5665
School education is sufficient enough to help me understand citizenship issues	54.931	212	.000	3.54717	3.4199	3.6745
School education in flexible	54.526	212	.000	3.55660	3.4280	3.6852

5.3.8 Summary of this section

To summarize, the examination of participants' responses towards ideological and political education generally reveals participants' marginally positive attitudes. The participants believe that they have learnt a lot of the personal dimension of citizenship understanding, and they have become concerned about social equality issues through the curriculum. In addition, they felt encouraged to take part in some broad civic activities by the university.

However, the participants expressed the expectation that the citizenship curriculum needs to be improved in its teaching contents, teaching methods and the provision of civic participation opportunities. The results show that the participants have learnt little of the national and social dimension of citizenship learning from the curriculum. In addition,

participants' preferred learning source of the mass media shows that they are no longer strictly confined within the curriculum for civic understanding, while they have developed the intention to search civic information from other sources.

5.4 Factor analysis: the participants' views on citizenship as experienced in the online public sphere

This section gives an overview of participants' civic experience in a wider picture related to the online public sphere in the Chinese context. The general results are presented with the intention to answer the 2nd auxiliary research question: within university students' attitudes towards mass media's implications for citizenship, how do university students view their civic experience that is prompted by the mass media? Three aspects related to the mass media are examined: participants' attitudes towards trust, mass media's entertainment characteristic and mass media's information abundance.

5.4.1 Students' attitudes towards social trust

I constructed five indices with the intention to measure the degree of social trust towards people and public organizations among the participants. Each index shows the distribution of participants' attitudes into a 1-5 scale, in which 1 represents strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. The analysing technique of one sample T-test is used, and Table 5.13 below presents a comparison between the means of the five indices. It is hypothesized that the mean for each scale should not differ from the midpoint of 3. Rather the output in Table 5.13 shows that each mean is different from the midpoint level of 3, which is supported at $P < .01$ level.

The second output in Table 5.14 below further shows that the means are all higher than the midpoint of 3. The mean score of "I trust my teachers" is the lowest, marginally higher than the middle level, indicating that most participants did not have a preference. Particularly, the means of the last four indices are significantly higher, indicating that the participants generally agreed with those four indices. They expressed that they trust their

families and friends; however, they do not develop enough trust towards voluntary organizations, governmental leaders and governmental staff. However, the standard deviations for the first two indices are both larger than 1, indicating a high variation among respondents' trust towards teachers, families and friends.

Table 5. 13: One-Sample Test of participants' social trust

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
I trust my teachers	2.657	212	.008	.19340	.0499	.3369
I trust my families and friends	8.150	212	.000	.56132	.4255	.6971
Most voluntary organizations are just looking out for own interests.	8.039	212	.000	.51415	.3881	.6402
The political leaders and governments are more interested in serving the public.	7.733	212	.000	.50000	.3725	.6275
I have little confidence in some governmental organizations and staff.	8.901	212	.000	.57075	.4443	.6972

Table 5. 14: One-Sample Statistics of participants' social trust

Index no.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	212	3.19	1.05998	.07280
2	212	3.56	1.00285	.06888
3	212	3.51	.93118	.06395
4	212	3.50	.94141	.06466
5	212	3.57	.93367	.06412

5.4.2 Students' attitudes towards mass media's entertainment characteristic

I constructed three indices which measure the overall attitudes towards mass media's feature of entertainment. The analysing technique of one sample T-test is used, and results show the distribution of students' responses into a 1-5 scale, where 1 signifies "strongly

disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree”.

Table 5.15 below shows that the mean scores of these three indices “it makes easy to understand citizenship issues”, “it is interesting and easily accepted by students” and “it is direct and connected with daily lives” are significantly higher than the midpoint of 3 at $P < 0.01$ level, indicating that the majority of participants did not hold a prejudice towards mass media’s entertainment feature, and indeed they have formed positive attitudes toward this characteristic. However, the mean score of the statement of “it makes easy to understand citizenship issues” is the lowest among those three statements, which demonstrates that the participants probably lacked confidence in relating entertainment information to citizenship understanding.

Table 5. 15: One-Sample Test: attitude towards the characteristic of entertainment

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
It makes easy to understand citizenship issues	48.137	212	.000	3.30660	3.1712	3.4420
It is interesting and easily accepted by students	53.357	212	.000	3.50472	3.3752	3.6342
It is direct and connected with daily lives	49.233	212	.000	3.45755	3.3191	3.5960

5.4.3 Students’ attitudes towards mass media’s information abundance

I also constructed three indices which measure the overall attitudes towards mass media’s characteristic of information abundance. The analysing technique of one sample T-test is used, and results show the distribution of students’ responses into a 1-5 scale, where 1 signifies “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree”.

From the below output in Table 5.16, it is observed that the mean scores of these three indices “it is useful for me understand citizenship”, “it provides different examples” and “it makes the public well informed about social policies” are significantly greater than the

middle point of 3, ranging from 3.3-3.6, which is supported at $P < .01$ level. In particular, the mean score of the third statement reaches the highest level compared to the other two mean scores. Therefore, the results show that the participants agreed with these statements, indicating their positive attitudes towards the characteristic of information abundance of mass media. In addition, the participants are more inclined to believe that the information on the mass media makes the public more informed about social issues.

Table 5. 16: One-Sample Test: attitude towards the characteristic of information abundance

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
It is useful for me to understand citizenship	51.978	212	.000	3.41981	3.2901	3.5495
It provides different examples	57.058	212	.000	3.48585	3.3654	3.6063
It makes the public well informed about social policies	57.014	212	.000	3.60377	3.4792	3.7284

5.4.4 Students' general attitudes towards mass media

I constructed five indices which measure the overall attitudes towards mass media. The same indices as were used in examining students' attitudes towards the university curriculum are employed (See section of 5.3.7). The analysing technique of one sample T-test is employed, and results show the distribution of students' responses into a 1-5 scale, where 1 signifies "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree".

Table 5.17 below shows that all these statements are supported by one-sample t-test at $p < .01$ level, and it indicates that the differences between the midpoint 3 are significant at 99% confidence level. The mean score of each index is significantly higher than the midpoint and even close to a higher level of 4, ranging from 3.88-4.2. Therefore, it is indicated that the participants are more likely to hold a positive attitude toward mass media when they want to follow citizenship issues. It is noticeable that the mean score of the

statement of “mass media is sufficient enough to help me understand citizenship issues” is the largest, which implies that the participants care about their autonomous understanding of citizenship issues with the help of mass media. However, the mean score of “I have received enough supports from mass media to put citizenship into practices” is the lowest, indicating that the effective mass media use among the participants is probably hard to sustain due to the lack of relevant supports.

Table 5. 17: One-Sample Test: general attitude towards mass media

	Mean	Test Value = 3				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
My knowledge of citizenship mainly comes from mass media	4.03774	39.045	212	.000	3.6906	4.0830
I have received enough supports from mass media to put citizenship into practices	3.88679	42.930	212	.000	3.8523	4.2231
Mass media has been able to provide useful answers to my questions about citizenship	4.05189	42.933	212	.000	3.8658	4.2379
Mass media is sufficient enough to help me understand citizenship issues	4.20755	46.334	212	.000	4.0285	4.3866
Mass media is flexible	4.14623	42.168	212	.000	3.9524	4.3401

When comparing mean scores of participants’ general attitudes towards mass media to those of participants general attitudes towards ideological and political education in section 4.3.7 (ranging from 3.43-3.55), it is noticeable that mean scores of the former part are significantly higher than that of the later part. Therefore, this shows that participants are more likely to develop an explicit positive attitude towards civic learning from mass media. In addition, the differences of the mean scores of the last two items are the largest, indicating that the participants believe that the mass media is more likely to offer flexible and efficient platforms for them to learn about citizenship knowledge.

To summarize, the examination of participants’ attitudes towards factors related to the

public sphere, especially the digital public sphere, show their low degree of social trust towards governments and public organizations, while they hold relative trust towards family and friends. As to their trust towards teachers, their responses vary in great degree. As to participants' attitudes towards the digital public sphere, it can be seen that the participants hold positive attitudes towards mass media's features of entertainment and information abundance. In addition, the results also reveal participants' stronger inclination for civic learning through mass media compared to their attitudes towards the citizenship curriculum.

5.5 Participants' expressed civic commitment

I constructed 3 indices which measure participants' civic commitment, and one sample T-test is employed, with results showing the distribution of students' responses into a 1-5 scale, where 1 signifies "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree".

Table 5.18 below shows that participants' responses are significantly different from the midpoint of 3 at $p < .01$ level. In addition, mean scores of those items ranging from 3.49-3.62 are higher than the midpoint; therefore showing that students generally agree that they would like to "know more about citizenship issues", "take part in civic activities" and "voluntarily get involved in citizenship learning". In other words, the participants' explicit intention of involvement in civic activities is demonstrated in this study.

Table 5. 18: One-Sample Test of participants' civic intention

	mean	Test Value = 3					
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
I would like to know more about citizenship issues	3.49	7.475	212	.000	.48585	.3577	.6140
I would like to take part in civic activities.	3.50	7.314	212	.000	.50472	.3687	.6407
I would like to voluntarily get involved in citizenship learning.	3.62	9.633	212	.000	.61792	.4915	.7444

The research further examines the possible relationship between participants' civic commitment and their attitudes towards different sources of citizenship learning. In order to achieve this purpose, the variable of civic commitment is created by summing these three statements (Cronbach's Alpha= .855). Similarly, the variables of participants' attitudes towards the citizenship curriculum and the mass media are created by summing their indices, and both Alphas are above .60 (.884 and .878 respectively). Then Bivariate regression analysis is run between the variable of the participants' citizenship commitment and the variables of their general attitudes towards the university curriculum and mass media, and the result is shown in Table 5.19.

Table 5. 19: Regression analysis for the relation between civic commitments and participants' attitudes towards the university citizenship curriculum and mass media

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
General attitude towards university curriculum	.182	.062	.173	2.924	.004
General attitude towards mass media	.502	.044	.675	11.414	.000

Table 5.19 shows that both stands of general attitudes are positively related with the participants' civic commitment, as both standardized coefficients are above 0, which is supported by $P < .01$ level. Therefore, it could be inferred that preconditions embodied through the curriculum and mass media could both provide conditions for developing civic intentions and thus provide possibility for civic participation.

However, differences can also be noticed. The standardized coefficient of the relationship between general attitudes towards mass media and civic intention is .675, which is much larger than the other standard coefficient of .173; therefore indicating a stronger relation, showing that 67.5% of variation in participants' civic intention can be explained by corresponding variation in their attitudes towards mass media. In addition, this positive relation is supported at $p < .01$ level.

Therefore, a strong sense of civic commitment among the participants is revealed from the quantitative data. In addition, the positive relationship between participants' civic intention and their different civic learning experience can be seen. Moreover, participants' civic commitment is more significantly positively related to their civic experience when influenced by the mass media.

5.6 Factor analysis: results of mass media use

Having described the demographics of the respondents and their general attitudes towards factors related to cultural citizenship, the research focus in this section is placed explicitly on presenting the results of the participants' use of different types of mass media. This relates directly to the 3rd auxiliary research question area: What is the general picture of students' mass media use? How do university students commence activities online? How do they commence relevant civic activities offline?

5.6.1 Media consumption time

Participants were asked about how much time per day they normally spend on mass media. Table 5.20 shows that more than 50% of the participants (53.8%) reported 1-3 hours of mass media time, and almost 30% of the participants reported their media consumption time at 3-5 hours. When coding these four levels into numbers: 1=less than 1 hour and 4=more than 5 hours, Table 5.21 further shows that the mean is 2.2, which means that it is between level 2 and level 3, thus indicating that participants' average time of media consumption is about 3-5 hours per day. In addition, the Standard Deviation is <1, indicating a small fluctuation in participants media consumption time. This result is consistent with a recent survey finding published by Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 2015 that an overwhelming majority of Chinese university students (over 90%) spend more than 2 hours on mass media per day.³⁰ Therefore, it can be seen that the sample in this research can be taken as a representative research sample for Chinese university students.

³⁰ See 2015 Zhongguo daxuesheng meiti shiyong xiguan diaocha baogao. [The 2015 Report on Chinese University Students' media use habits], published on July 19, 2015. Retrieved from <http://media.people.com.cn/n/2015/0720/c397572-27329888.html> Accessed December 2 2015.

Table 5. 20 Participants' media consumption time (n=212)

Media consumption time	Participants	Valid percent
Less than 1 hour	33	15.6%
1-3 hours	114	53.8%
3—5 hours	50	23.6%
more than 5 hours	15	7.1%

Table 5. 21: The mean of media consumption time (n=212)

Mean	Participants (N)	Std. Deviation
2.22	212	.79268

5.6.2 Media types

The participants in this study were all generally users of mass media. Scholars have argued that time spent on different types of mass media would produce different results of citizenship learning outcomes; therefore, this section reports on how participants use specific type of mass media and identifies their perceived attitudes to media use.

Table 5. 22: Means and modes of time on different types of mass media

	CCTV news	Entertainment TV program	movies	The Internet	Social networks	newspaper
Mean	2.06	2.51	1.85	2.75	3.12	1.81
Mode	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	1.00

The calculation of means and modes can give a direct map of how various types of mass media were consumed by the participants. When coding four levels of consumption time into numbers: 1=less than 1 hour and 4= more than 5 hours, Table 5.22 shows the means and modes of six types of mass media. Notably, the participants tended to spend more time on the Internet and social networks, with the modes of 3 and 4 respectively, indicating that they normally spent 3-5 hours on the internet, and even more time on the social network. Entertainment TV programs and movies were also comparatively popular among the

participant with the modes of 2. Particularly, the participants generally spent more time on the former, with the average time of 2.51 hours per day.

The modes of watching CCTV (Chinese Central Television) news and newspaper consumption were both 1, which means that most participants would spend less than an hour on serious news of this sort per day, thus indicating that these two types of mass media were the least popular among the participants. In addition, the mean of newspaper reading was the smallest, showing that the participants spent least time on this type of mass media. This research finding is consistent with the 2015 report by Shanghai Jiao Tong University that more than 50% of Chinese university students never spend time in reading newspapers.³¹

Participants' specific attitudes towards three types of mass media are explored in this section with the intention to provide some further evidence and explanation. Several statements were constructed for each type of mass media, and each statement shows the distribution of participants' responses into a 1-5 scale, where 1 signifies "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree". The analysing technique of one sample T-test is used, and Table 5.23, Table 5.24 and Table 5.25 present a comparison of the means.

8 indices were constructed to represent participants' attitudes towards serious TV news, for example CCTV news. Table 5.23 shows that all results are significant at $p < .01$, indicating that their response is significantly different from the middle level of 3. On the one hand, the mean values for the first four statements are above a midpoint of 3, which indicates participants' positive attitudes towards particular characteristics of CCTV news. Specifically, the participants believed that the content itself in CCTV news "is reliable and useful", and can "motivate school education" and "provide critical views", thus they generally agreed that "they would like to understand citizenship issue through this program". On the other hand, the mean values of the other 4 statements are below a

³¹ See 2015 Zhongguo daxuesheng meiti shiyong xiguan diaocha baogao. [The 2015 Report on Chinese University Students' media use habits], published on July 19, 2015. Retrieved from <http://media.people.com.cn/n/2015/0720/c397572-27329888.html> Accessed December 2 2015.

midpoint of 3, which indicates negative attitudes towards the modes of presentation of CCTV news. Specifically, the participants disagreed with the statements that “its content is closely connected with daily life”, “It is interesting and creative” and “it is entertaining”, thus they generally confessed that they were less likely to be influenced for civic purposes by CCTV news. In addition, the standard deviation for the statement of “it can provide critical views” is larger than 1, indicating the larger fluctuation in participants’ views of this statement.

Table 5. 23: One-Sample T test of participants’ attitudes towards CCTV news

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
It can motivate school education	212	3.56	.983	.000
I would like to understand citizenship issues through this program	212	3.54	.980	.000
The information is reliable and useful	212	3.49	.941	.000
It can provide critical views	212	3.34	1.003	.000
The content is closely connected with daily life	212	2.37	.881	.000
I would be more easily influenced by this program	212	2.32	.804	.000
It is interesting and creative	212	2.24	.744	.000
It is entertaining	212	1.83	.546	.000

These 8 indices in Table 5.24 were employed to understand participants’ attitudes towards entertainment TV programs. Table 5.24 shows that all results are significant at $p < .01$, indicating that their response is significantly different from the middle level of 3. Specifically, all mean values were above the midpoint of 3, indicating that the participants generally held a positive attitude towards this entertainment TV program. Among them, the mean value of the first statement “I would be more influenced by this program” is the largest, reflecting that participants generally acknowledged the direct influence they have experienced from entertainment programs. The statement of “it can provide critical view” in this part received the smallest value (3.05), close to the middle point, indicating that the participants held neutral attitudes towards this statement. It is interesting to note that the standard deviations of four statements are > 1 , indicating more fluctuation in the

participants' attitudes towards entertainment TV programs.

Table 5. 24: One-Sample T test of attitudes towards entertainment TV program

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
I would be more easily influenced by this program	212	3.51	.964	.000
It can motivate school education	212	3.47	1.004	.000
I would like to understand citizenship issues through this program	212	3.47	1.027	.000
It is entertaining	212	3.46	.980	.000
It is interesting and creative	212	3.40	1.009	.000
The content is closely connected with daily life	212	3.30	1.010	.000
The information is reliable and useful	212	3.25	.958	.000
It can provide critical views	212	3.05	.921	.000

I constructed 5 indices to understand participants' attitudes towards the social network, for example micro-blogging. Table 5.25 below in the following page shows that all results are significant at $p < .01$, thus indicating that their response is significantly different from the middle level of 3. Specifically, all mean values were above the midpoint of 3, indicating that the participants generally held a positive attitude towards social networks. In addition, all the standard deviations are < 1 , indicating the steady and consistent positive attitudes towards social networks among the participants. Among them, the mean value of the first statement "it has provided a direct way for our voices to be heard, if we use it properly" is the largest, which reflects that the participants generally acknowledged the function of micro- blogging in expressing personal ideas and creating personal topics, thus indicating that the majority of respondents identified their personal motivation of using the social networks to express themselves and get connected with other people.

5.6.3 Media content

It is observed from the findings above that the participants spent more time on new mass media such as the Internet and social networks, and the majority of participants have identified the Internet's usefulness in their personal searching for civic knowledge. This

section explores more details about their internet use such as the frequency of their specific online activities. The participants were given a list of 10 common online activities, and they were asked to report their frequencies, which are shown in Table 5.26 below in the following page. Moreover, the mode and mean of each activity is also provided for more instant and useful information in Table 5.26.

Table 5. 25: One-Sample T test of attitudes towards the social network of the micro-blogging

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
It has provided a direct way for our voices to be heard, if we use it properly	212	3.64	.935	.000
I would like to get involved in activities organized by the mass media	212	3.58	.996	.000
Discussion topics have made me understand some social issues better and more directly	212	3.54	.940	.000
I would like to forward some topics related to social issues	212	3.45	.970	.000
I use this tool to get connected with my friends	212	3.41	.967	.000

The 10 online activities are divided into three groups according to the values of the modes in Table 5.26. There are 6 kinds of activities with the mode of 4, indicating a high frequency among the participants. It is notable that the activity of “playing games, watching movies or enjoying music” is the most popular, also with the mean of 3.76, which is consistent with the previous finding that entertainment is the main purpose of online activities. Next is the option of “following the news” with the mean of 3.71, slightly smaller than that of entertainment activities. Over 75% of the participants reported that they fairly often or often use the Internet to keep informed which is larger than the percentage of participants fairly often or often using the Internet for entertainment activities (68%). Therefore, it is indicated that entertainment is not the only purpose among the participants, whereas participants also overwhelmingly reported their main activity to be “following the news”. “Chatting with friends” appeared to be the next, with the mean of 3.69. The following activities with the mode of 4 are “getting involved in social

discussion”, “visiting civic websites” and “voting online”, with means of 3.41, 3.32 and 3.13 respectively. It is interesting to note that the activities of “visiting civic websites” and “voting online” are frequently reported by the participants.

Table 5. 26: Frequency of participants' online activities

	never	Not often	sometimes	fairly often	Very often	mean	mode
Online shopping	6.6%	24.5	34.9	26.4	7.5	3.03	3
Playing games, Watching movies or enjoying the music	2.4%	8.5	20.8	46.7	21.7	3.76	4
Chatting with friends	1.9%	13.2	11.3	60.8	12.7	3.69	4
Following the news	3.3	12.3	9.4	59.4	15.6	3.71	4
getting involved in social discussion	2.8	17.5	26.9	41.0	11.8	3.41	4
forwarding social topics in personal blog	6.6	20.8	36.3	25.5	10.8	3.13	3
visiting civic websites	3.8	22.2	25.0	36.3	12.7	3.32	4
organizing or joining in a social campaign	5.2	19.3	35.4	24.1	16.0	3.26	3
vote online	13.7	17.5	23.1	33.5	12.3	3.13	4
sign petitions	35.8	42.5	8.0	6.6	7.1	2.05	2

The second group with the mode of 3 includes activities of “online shopping”, “organizing or joining in a social campaign” and “forwarding social topics in personal blog”, indicating that most participants chose the option of “sometimes” for those activities. Surprisingly, online shopping is not quite common among the respondents, and 26.4% would quite often shop online. The activity of “signing petitions” is categorized in the third group, as its mode is 2. It indicates that most of the participants with the proportion of 42.5% reported the scale of 2= not often. In addition, the average frequency of this activity is 2.05, which is significantly below the level of 3. It is also notable that about 35% of the participants expressed no experience of this activity online.

To summarize, the results show that entertainment is not the only purpose in the participants' mass media use, while searching for news, communication and discussion appear to be an important part in participants' online activities. In addition, it is surprising

to find that the participants reported much experience of following civic information and online voting. However, their active participation in social campaigns and signing petitions is limited.

5.6.4 Media use for civic activities offline

Participants' civic activities in their daily lives under the influence of mass media are explored in this section. The participants were given a list of 6 common offline civic activities, and they were asked to report their frequencies, which are shown in Table 5.27. What's more, the mode and mean of each activity is also provided for more instant and useful information.

Table 5. 27: The percentages, modes and means of participants' civic activities offline

	never	Not often	sometimes	fairly often	Very often	mode	mean
Vote in national-level elections	25.9	36.8	28.5	8.5	5.5	2	2.20
Get in touch with some governmental officials	15.1	20.3	45.3	17.0	2.4	3	2.71
Take part in public events designed to raise awareness of equality and justice	5.2	7.5	21.2	51.9	14.2	4	3.62
Join a community or voluntary organization	2.8	15.6	48.1	21.7	11.8	3	3.24
Donate money to poor people	4.2	15.6	36.3	26.9	17.0	3	3.36
Discussion and communication about social affairs	2.4	11.8	11.3	58.0	16.5	4	3.74

The modes of the activities of “take part in public events designed to raise awareness of equality and justice” and “discussion and communication about social affairs” are 4, which show a high frequency of these two activities among the participants. Specifically, more than 60% of the respondents reported the frequency of each activity above the midpoint, indicating more than 60% would fairly often or more often take part in these two activities. The results in Table 5.10 (See section 5.3.5) show that about 30% of the participants would fairly often or more often “take part in public events designed to raise awareness of equality and justice” encouraged by the university, thus indicating a higher possibility of

their participation under the influence of mass media. However, the activity of “discussion and communication about social affairs”, in both contexts, shows similarly high frequency.

The modes of activities of “getting in touch with governmental officials”, “joining a community or voluntary organization” and “donating money to poor people” are all 3, indicating a relatively low frequency compared with above two activities. It is noticeable to find that the mean of “getting in touch with governmental officials” is significantly smaller under the midpoint, which indicates that participants reported less experience of political communication with officials than social participation such as “joining a community or voluntary organization” and “donating money to poor people”. However, Table 5.10 (See section 5.3.5) shows that the mode of “getting in touch with governmental officials” encouraged by the university is 2, thus indicating a higher occurrence of this activity under the influence of mass media. Another noticeable finding is that the participants reported more experience of “joining a community or voluntary organization” and “donating money to poor people” in the campus, as their modes are larger with 4 in Table 5.10 (See section 5.3.5).

The mode of “voting in national-level elections” is the lowest with the mode of 2 and the mean of 2.2, thus showing students’ limited civic experience of political voting through mass media. Only 5.5% reported their experience of voting in national-level elections. Similarly, Table 5.10 (See section 5.3.5) shows the mode of “voting in national-level elections” encouraged by the university is 2, indicating the same situation in participants’ limited experience of this activity in both contexts.

5.6.5 Summary

The foregoing results show that most of the participants considered themselves as mass media users. Among different types of mass media, the usage levels of the Internet, social networks, entertainment TV programs and movies are high, based on participants’ personal motivation for civic information seeking and civic expression.

The participants' main use of the Internet is not confined to entertainment purposes, but also to follow news and to keep informed, to communicate and discuss with others, and to visit civic websites of particular interest to this study. However, their use of the Internet for explicit political purposes is limited. In addition, the respondents are motivated to be more involved in civic activities offline. The majority of respondents used the mass media to get in touch with governmental officials and to take part in public events for equality and justice. Nevertheless, few participants used the mass media for influencing their national voting in the political arena.

5.7 Inferential analysis: analysing potential relationships

This study further conducts inferential analysis to examine potential linkages between using different types of mass media and participants' forms of civic participation in everyday life. Data analysis is processed in two steps. First, a Pearson correlation analysis is conducted in order to examine the correlations among demographic factors, mass media use and civic participation. Second, multiple regression analyses are operated, as this model is used to measure the degrees of association among more than one independent variables (Predictors) and a dependent variable (Criterion). Partial correlation analyses are also conducted such as: on the relationship between online participation and offline participation; the relationship between participants' perceived civic learning outcomes and civic participation; the relationship between social trust and civic participation.

5.7.1 Relationships between mass media use and forms of offline civic participation

As described earlier, the new variables of "political participation" and "broader civic participation" were created by summing the variables of particular kinds of civic activities at Cronbach's Alpha= 0.855 and 0.753 respectively, which shows the acceptable reliability for further analysis. It first examines the bivariate correlation between demographics and participants' habits of media use. The results in Appendix 8 show that female students tended to spend more time on entertainment TV programs ($r=.082$, $P<.05$) and social networks ($r=.021$, $P<.05$) than male students. In addition, participants in higher studying

years tended to have higher levels of political interest ($r=.149$, $P<.05$) and use more social networks ($r=.163$, $P<.05$) than participants in lower studying years. Moreover, participants who reported high levels of political interest are more likely to engage in civic participation ($r=.296$, $P<.01$) and political participation ($r=.293$, $P<.01$) than those reporting low levels of political interest. The analysis also shows that civic participation led to more political participation ($r=.613$, $P<.05$) after controlling for the demographics and for media use. However, the reverse effect to civic participation from political participation is not found.

I further conduct a multiple regression analysis to measure the relationships between six independent variables of mass media (watching CCTV news, entertainment programs on TV, movies, the Internet, social network and reading newspaper) and dependent variables (the frequency of conducting political participation and broad civic participation). Table 5.28 below shows the model fits the data in regard to participation in the six mass media uses.

Table 5. 28: Regression coefficients for mass media's relation with broader civic participation and political participation

Predictors	Broader Civic participation b coefficient	Political participation b coefficient
CCTV news	-.555	.846***
Entertainment TV programs	.606***	.004
Movies	.463**	-.213
The internet	-.248	-.301
The social networks	.188***	.168
Newspaper reading	.370	.782***
F	5.131***	6.705***
Adjusted R ²	.276	.494

Note: *** $p=.000$, ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$

The results in Table 5.28 indicate that the variable of “entertainment TV programs”, “movies” and “social networks” are strong predictors of the summed variable of broader civic participation, even when the value of the Adjusted R² is low. Different authors have

noticed that a low R^2 does not undermine the regression model and do not reduce validity to the significant predictors (Fonticella, 1994; Taatgen & Van Rijn, 2010). The P values show that these three independent variables are making a significant contribution to the variation in the dependent variable of broader civic participation at $P < 0.001$ level and $P < 0.01$ level respectively. Specifically, the variable of “entertainment programs on TV” has the largest beta coefficient (.606). This means that participants watching entertainment TV programs compared to those who do not consume such media type increased in .60 units the possibility of broader civic participation when the effect of other predictors in the model is held constant. The beta values for “social network” and “movies” are smaller (.259 and .194 separately) indicating that they have made comparatively less of the contribution to the variation in the dependent variable. Therefore, it can be concluded that time spent on entertainment TV programs, social networks and movies are positively related with the participants’ broad civic activities.

The results in Table 5.28 also indicate that the variables of “CCTV news” and “newspaper reading” are strong predictors of the summed variable of political participation, even when the value of the Adjusted R^2 is low. The P values show that these two independent variables are making a significant contribution to the variation in the dependent variable of political participation at $P < 0.001$ level. Specifically, the variable of “CCTV news” has the largest beta coefficient (.846). This means that the variable of watching CCTV news accounts for 84.6% of the variance in political participation. Participants watching more CCTV news compared to those who do not consume such media types would increase in .846 units the possibility of political participation when the effect of other predictors in the model is held constant. The beta value for “newspaper reading” is smaller (.782), but it also indicates its positive relationship with participants’ political participation.

However, it is surprising to find that relationships between the Internet and broader civic participation as well as political participation are rejected, because both p values are larger than .1. Therefore, no obvious results are obtained on the causal direction between the Internet and participation. A possible explanation can be that it is probably caused by the

confusion in understanding “the Internet” among the participants, as different types of online activities are included, and various online purposes exist.

5.7.2 Analysis of relationships between online activities and offline participation

In the above analysis of the relationship between the Internet and civic activities, it is noticeable that no evidence is found to support the existence of any significant relationship between more internet use and more civic activity, as the P values of the sets of regression analyses are $> .1$. An explanation for this result has been proposed earlier, and the following section proceeds to explore specific forms of online activities and to discover its relationship with offline engagements.

Within the literature review in Chapter 2, Cohen and Kahne (2012) proposed two categories of online activities: politically driven online participation and interest driven activities. This research further regroups the 10 listed online activities into three groups: entertainment online activities, information-based online activities and politically driven online participation (See Table 5.29 below). Three variables of these groups are commuted, and the internal consistency reliability test is operated. Table 5.30 shows that the first two Cronbach’s Alpha values are larger than the threshold of 0.6, indicating a relatively high consistency, which means that these two items can be kept in the later data analysis procedure. However, the last Cronbach’s Alpha value is smaller than 0.6., indicating a low consistency. When further deleting the online activity of “sign a petition” and running the test again, the value is 0.616, thus indicating a relatively high consistency. Therefore, the variable of ‘politically driven online participation’ is commuted from the data of two items: organizing or joining in a social campaign and voting online.

Table 5. 29: Three categories of online activities

Category	Online activities
Category I: entertainment online activities	Online shopping; Playing games, Watching movies or enjoying the music; Chatting with friends
Category II: information-based online activities	Following the news; getting involved in social discussion; forwarding social topics in personal blog; visiting civic websites
Category III: political driven online participation	organizing or joining in a social campaign; vote online; sign a petition

Table 5. 30: the Cronbach's Alpha values of three groups of online activities

Scale	Cronbach's values	Alpha	Number of items
Entertainment online activities	0.608		3
Information-based online activities	0.778		4
Political driven online participation	0.578		3
Political driven online participation	0.616		2

A multiple regression analysis is conducted to measure the relationships among three independent variables of online activities (entertainment online activities, information-based online activities and politically driven online participation) and dependent variables (the frequency of conducting political participation and broader civic participation). Table 5.31 shows the model fits the data in regard to participation in the three categories of online activities.

The results in Table 5.31 show that no significant relationship is found between all categories of online activities and offline political engagements, as the P value $> .1$ level. Therefore, no obvious results are obtained on the causal direction between the online activities and political participation among the participants. In addition, the P value for the relationship between entertainment online activities and broader civic participation is $> .1$ level, thus it also indicates that no obvious results are obtained on the causal direction between the entertainment online activities and broader civic participation.

Table 5. 31: Regression coefficients for online activities' relation with civic participation and political participation

Predictors	Broader participation b coefficient	Civic participation b coefficient
Entertainment online activities	.102	-.054
Information-based online activities	.321***	.601
Political driven online participation	.323***	-.021
F	38.2555***	.386
Adjusted R ²	.346	-.009

Note: ***p= .000, **p<.01, *p<.05

It is noticeable from the table above that the variables of information-based online activities and politically driven online activities are strong predictors for broader civic participation, even when the value of the Adjusted R² is low. The P values show that those two independent variables are making a significant contribution to the variation in the dependent variable of civic participation at P<0.001 level. Specifically, participants who used the internet for information purposes and political purposes compared to those with less of these purposes increased in .32 units the possibility of civic participation when the effect of other predictors in the model is held constant. Therefore, it can be concluded that information-based online activities and politically driven online participation are positively related with the participants' broad civic activities.

5.7.3 The relationship between social trust and civic participation

A Bivariate regression analysis is conducted for the relationship between social trust and civic engagements. The five statements of social trust are combined, and the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.832, indicating a relatively high consistency. The results in Table 5.32 demonstrate a positive but weak correlation between the two variables. The R Square value of .129 shows a relatively marginal level of correlation between the predictor and the criterion. A Beta value of .359 reflects a positive correlation between them, indicating that the higher the trust degree possessed by the participants, the more they are willing to engage with civic activities, and the result is supported at significance level of p< .01. Generally, it shows that a greater sense of social trust does promote civic participation,

although the strength of this effect is modest.

Table 5. 32: Bivariate regression analysis for the relation between trust and civic activities

Predictor	R Square	Beta Value	P Value	Significance Level
Social trust	.129	.359	.000	P<0.01

5.7.4 The relationship between perceived civic knowledge and civic participation

A Bivariate regression analysis is conducted for the relationship between participants' perceived citizenship learning outcomes and their civic activities. In particular, attention is paid to the concern about whether students' self-understanding of citizenship from the university curriculum can be developed into real actions in their civic lives. The indices of received learning outcomes are combined and the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.876, indicating a relatively high consistency. A Beta value of .353 indicates a positive correlation between the predictor and the criterion. This association is significant at $p < .001$. The results output indicates that there is a positive relation between received citizenship learning outcomes in participants' perspectives and their relevant citizenship activities. Thus this means that the more one believes that participants have received citizenship knowledge, the more they would like to put it into practices in real life. However, this kind of relation is rather weak. The R Square of .124 in Table 5.33 indicates that the 12.4 percentage of variation in civic participation is explained by the variation in the received citizenship learning outcomes. In other words, the results suggest that having more civic knowledge will not necessarily lead to more participation in civic activities, and more supporting conditions need to be qualified even if the participants believe that they have received a lot of citizenship knowledge.

Table 5. 33: Bivariate regression analysis for the relation between received citizenship learning and civic activities

Predictor	R Square	Beta Value	P Value	Significance Level
perceived citizenship learning	.124	.353	.000	P<0.001

5.8 Analysis of the moderation effect of demographic factors

This section further explores the influence of demographic data on civic commitment among the participants. The technique of ANOVA is used to explore differences among different groups of participants. Another underlying concern in this research is whether different demographic characteristics moderate the relationship between mass media use and civic participation among this research sample. Therefore, control variables, consisting of gender, education level, educational background and political status are further tested to find out their moderating influence. The regression analysis model for different groups is employed, controlling for other demographic characteristics.

5.8.1 Gender

A one-way ANOVA test is used to explore differences between genders in participants' civic commitment. The results in Table 5.34 show that there are no significant differences between males and females in terms of participants' citizenship commitment, as p value is at $> .05$ level.

Table 5. 34: One-way ANOVA of gender on civic commitment

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Civic commitment	Between Groups	2.547	1	2.547	3.593	.059
	Within Groups	148.843	210	.709		
	Total	151.389	211			

Previous analysis (See section of 5.7.1 above) has demonstrated the positive relationship among entertainment TV programs, social networks and broader civic participation in this research, and the relationship is supported at $p < 0.01$ level. A linear regression is further conducted to explore whether gender moderates the relationship between mass media and civic participation, and a split group analysis between male and female is carried out to test the moderator of gender.

Table 5. 35: Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for gender=male)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Entertainment TV programs	2.501	.250		10.011	.000
	.298	.097	.307	3.073	.003

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Entertainment TV program	2.659	.204		13.019	.000
	.264	.076	.305	3.469	.001

Table 5. 36: Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for gender=female)

The results in Table 5.35 and Table 5.36 indicate that for the female group the relation is supported at $P < .01$ level, indicating that the moderator variable does not change the strength of the causal relationship between entertainment TV program and broader civic participation. Meanwhile, for the male group the relation is also supported at $P < .01$ level, indicating the existence of the same strength of the relationship. Therefore, moderating by gender has no effect on the relationship between the independent variable of “entertainment TV programs” and the dependent variable of ‘broader civic participation’ for both male and female participants.

The results in Table 5.37 and Table 5.38 indicate that for the male group the relationship between social networks and broad civic participation is not supported, as P is at > 0.1 level, indicating that the moderator variable weakens the strength of the causal relationship. On the contrary, for the female group the relationship is supported at $P < .01$ level, indicating the moderator variable does not change the strength of the relationship at all. Therefore,

gender moderates on the relationship between the independent variable of “social networks” and the dependent variable of civic activities for males, but has no effect on females, which means that female participants are more likely to take part in civic participation through using social networks.

Table 5. 37: Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broad civic participation (Selecting only cases for gender=male)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Social networks	2.814	.299		9.403	.000
	.134	.093	.150	1.444	.152

Table 5. 38: Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broad civic participation (Selecting only cases for gender=female)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Social networks	2.513	.209		12.017	.000
	.263	.064	.355	4.105	.000

5.8.2 Educational level

The same analysis procedure is carried out as has been conducted to control for the variable of gender. Based on the one-way ANOVA test, the results in Table 5.40 show that there are significant differences between participants of different educational levels in terms of citizenship commitment, which is supported at $p < .01$ level. In addition, the mean score for citizenship commitment in Table 5.39 indicates that students in their third year showed the highest degree of civic intention at 3.75. In addition, it is also shown that participants from their third year and fourth year tended to have homogeneous high levels of civic intention, while participants from the first year and the second year both showed low levels.

Table 5. 39: Mean scores: One-way ANOVA of educational levels on civic commitment

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
first year	25	3.2400	.86880	.17376	2.8814	3.5986
second year	57	3.2924	.79450	.10523	3.0816	3.5032
third year	78	3.7479	.87318	.09887	3.5510	3.9447
fourth year	52	3.6282	.76313	.10583	3.4157	3.8407
Total	212	3.5362	.84705	.05818	3.4215	3.6508

Table 5. 40: One-way ANOVA of educational levels on civic commitment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.516	3	3.172	4.651	.004
Within Groups	141.873	208	.682		
Total	151.389	211			

A linear regression is further conducted to explore whether educational level moderates the relationship between mass media and civic participation, and a split group analysis between different educational levels is carried out to test the moderator of educational level. Due to the large number of the tables required to indicate the results, the operation procedure is listed in Appendix 9. The results show that educational level moderates on the relationship between the independent variables of “entertainment TV programs” and “social networks” and the dependent variable of “broader civic participation”. Participants in the third year and the fourth year are more likely to attend broad civic participation influenced by watching entertainment TV programs. In addition, only participants in their first year are less likely to take part in civic activities under the influence of using social

networks.

5.8.3 Educational Background

A one-way ANOVA test is used to explore differences between educational backgrounds in participants' civic commitment. The results in Table 5.41 show that there are no significant differences between arts and science in terms of participants' citizenship commitment, as p value is at $> .1$ level.

Table 5. 41: One-way ANOVA of educational background on civic commitment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.466	2	.233	.322	.725
Within Groups	150.924	209	.722		
Total	151.389	211			

A linear regression is further conducted to explore whether educational background moderates the relationship between mass media and civic participation, and a split group analysis is carried out to test the moderator of educational background. The results in Table 5.42 and Table 5.43 below indicate that for participants of the arts the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation is supported at $P < .01$ level, indicating that the moderator variable does not change the strength of the causal relationship at all. Meanwhile, for the science participants the relation is also supported at $P < .01$ level, indicating the same strength of the relationship at work. Therefore, the factor of educational background has no effect on the relationship between the independent variable of "entertainment TV programs" and the dependent variable of "broader civic participation".

Table 5. 42: Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational background=arts)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Entertainment TV programs	11.242	.938		11.988	.000
	1.072	.342	.324	3.135	.002

Table 5. 43: Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational background=science)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Entertainment TV programs	11.284	.957		11.788	.000
	1.144	.374	.282	3.056	.003

The results in Table 5.44 and Table 5.45 below indicate that for participants of the arts the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation is not supported, as P is at >0.1 level, indicating that the moderator variable weakens the strength of the causal relationship. On the contrary, for the science group the relation is supported at $P<.01$ level, indicating the moderator variable does not change the strength of the relationship at all. Therefore, educational background moderates on the relationship between the independent variable of “social network” and the dependent variable of civic activities for participants of arts, but has no effect on science students, which means that participants of science are more likely to take part in civic participation through using social networks.

Table 5. 44: Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational background=arts)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Social networks	11.388	1.144		9.955	.000
	.835	.348	.253	2.401	.019

Table 5. 45: Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational background=science)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Social networks	10.010	.948		10.561	.000
	1.321	.295	.396	4.478	.000

5.8.4 Political status

The one-way ANOVA test in Table 5.46 shows that there are no significant differences between participants of different political status in terms of citizenship commitment, as P is at $>.1$ level. Rather, the mean score shows that students who are CYLC would be more likely to participate in civic activities. However, previous research has found that the Party members tend to engage in civic activities at a higher level than the general public (Guo, 2007).

Table 5. 46: One-way ANOVA of political status on civic commitment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.700	3	.233	.322	.809
Within Groups	150.690	208	.724		
Total	151.389	211			

A linear regression is further conducted to explore whether political status moderates the relationship between mass media and civic participation, and a split group analysis is carried out to test the moderator. Due to the large number of the tables required to indicate the results, the operation procedure is listed in Appendix 10. The results show that political status moderates on the relationship between “entertainment TV programs” and “social networks” and broader civic participation. Specifically, it shows that students who are members of CYLC are more likely to be motivated in civic activities by entertainment TV programs. In addition, students who are members of CPC and also CYLC are more likely to use social networks to get involved in civic activities.

5.8.5 Summary

To summarize, the data outputs in this section show that there are no differences in participants’ civic commitment among groups of different genders, educational backgrounds and political status. However, students in different studying years showed differences in their civic intention. Students in their third year tended to think more about civic issues. As to the variable moderating the relationship between entertainment TV

programs and civic activities, moderating effect from the factors of educational level and political status is found. As to the variable moderating the relationship between social networks and civic activities, the results show that the moderators of gender, educational level, educational background and political status are all at work in this research.

5.9 Themes emerging from the discussion of the quantitative findings

Overall, the presentation of the results and a preliminary discussion of the quantitative data above have offered an overview of the demographic information from the questionnaire and generally provided data to answer the first four auxiliary research question areas. The questionnaire data has described a comprehensive picture of Chinese university students' civic experience from the university curriculum and from mass media. University students' civic engagement under the influence of mass media is also explored, and these data are also contributing to answering in part the central research question.

The preliminary findings indicate a marginally hopeful sign for citizenship learning through ideological and political education among university students. University students showed a high level of civic commitment and relevant learnt civic knowledge about the personal and social dimensions of citizenship. They were encouraged to take part in a wide range of broader civic activities. In addition, participants' neural attitudes inclined to the positive responses towards their civic experience through the university citizenship curriculum are examined. However, the main propaganda task for the CPC's policies through ideological and political education is not fully completed, as most students expressed themselves as not fully developing a strong sense of national patriotism and socialism values through the curriculum. The participants reported on the inability of ideological and political education to provide sufficient civic knowledge and enough civic participation opportunities for university students. This is consistent with the commonly held views of citizenship education in China that ideological and political education is exerting a complicated and paradoxical role in developing active citizens among university students (Yang, 2002).

Although this study shows that the participants have learnt much about the personal dimension of civic knowledge, the later statistical analysis suggests that a perceived civic knowledge does not necessarily result in active civic participation. This draws more attention to the negative effect of the current citizenship education. It is indicated that more information needs to be collected in understanding how university students personally view their received civic education in the university and their informal civic learning in wider society. This aspect is explored in Chapter Six, where the discussion is based on an analysis of students' interview data.

The importance of mass media in facilitating the deeper civic understanding and wider civic participation in daily life is highlighted from the study. Specifically, the majority of the participants admitted that mass media provided them with understandable accounts of civic issues, a greater platform in daily life for civic expression and enabled citizens to be more informed. This indicates that the ignorance of the civic implications of mass media in traditional Chinese media research bears the blame for providing an incomplete picture of students' mass media use.

The results show that participants were generally mass media users, and they spent more time on new mass media such as Internet websites and social networks. As to specific online activities, the results show that entertainment was not the only purpose in participants' internet use while searching for news, communication and discussion appeared to be an important part of participants' online activities. In addition, it is surprising to find that the participants reported much experience of visiting civic websites and online voting.

The data suggests that participants have developed significantly positive and confident attitudes towards the contents of different types of mass media. Standards of entertainment and its connection with daily lives are found to be an important factor in participants' media use. For instance, the findings suggest that although the potentially harmful effects of the entertainment aspects of some TV programs were detected by the participants, more

than 50% of them were still willing to make use of its potential for civic participation. This indicates that there is some potential for receiving civic information from entertainment media experiences among university students.

Positive relationships between the intensity of entertainment TV programs, movies and social networks and students' broader civic participation beyond the domain of the university citizenship curriculum are found in this research. The study further reveals that those information-based and politically driven online activities are related to civic engagement among university students in a positive way. Therefore, this echoes the literature review in section 4.2.2.2 that some kinds of online interaction can lead to more explicit offline civic engagement, while some cannot (Shah et al., 2001; Shah et al., 2002; Wellman et al., 2001). In addition, the findings also suggest that participants' online activities, whether information based or politically driven ones are positively related with broader civic participation, while their relationships with political participation are not found. This is consistent with the general findings in other research that the Internet's civic role lies in civic participation rather than political participation such as the electoral and governmental arenas (Davis et al., 2004).

It is also obvious to note that serious news and reading newspaper is positively related to political forms of participation among university students. This agrees with my literature review findings that a positive engagement with the news seems to sustain both voting and an interest in politics (Livingstone & Markham, 2008). Although the *b* coefficients are comparatively high at .846 and .782 respectively, one should certainly be cautious in interpreting the relationships between variables of serious news as well as newspaper and traditional civic engagements. That is, the causal relationship would run in both directions. When students participate in national votes or get in touch with political officials, they are more likely to be those who opt to spend more time on serious news and reading newspapers. In addition, the results show that only a few students reported their use of serious news and newspapers, as well as their participation in political engagements. Therefore, the task for future studies on this topic could explore more about the potential

causal relationship at work here.

It would be hasty, however, to reach the conclusion that most university students performed active citizenship as a result of their mass media use. A closer look at the specific types of civic participation would provide some explanations. For instance, the activity of “discussion and communication about social affairs” is the most frequent activity (with the percentage of 75%) among the participants, while the percentage of involvements in political activities such as voting is quite low at the level of 28%. In addition, their online participation in social campaigning and signing petitions is limited. This reflects students’ low attendance in traditional forms of civic participation. Therefore, it could be inferred that explicit political activities are limited among students even under the influence of new mass media.

A lack of support from teachers or social organizations appears to be an important factor in further effectively developing civic experience through mass media among the participants, suggesting that there is a potential deficit of guidance and support for university students who have perceived the benefits of mass media. University leaders and teachers are reluctant to take active actions to students’ needs, and this is consistent with the passive responses to students’ mass media perceived from the literature review in Chapter Three.

The statistical analyses reveal several differences of the significance of demographic characteristics such as gender, educational background, educational level and party affiliation in relation to participants’ broader civic participation. Female students are more likely to attend civic activities via social networks. Undergraduate students in their third and fourth years are more likely to participate in civic activities if they have a steady use of entertainment TV programs and social networks. Students majoring in science who used more social networks scored higher in civic participation variables compared to students majoring in arts. It is surprising to members of CYLC were found to show a higher civic commitment than Party members, and this is in contrast with a previous research study that the Party members tend to engage in civic activities at a higher level than the general

public (Guo, 2007). In addition, members of CYLC are more likely to be influenced by entertainment TV programs in civic participation, while members of the CPC and members of the CYLC both tend to participate under the influence of social networks. It is important to explore deeply the interaction between demographic factors and their corresponding civic participation patterns with the intention to understand how these factors could be used to encourage students to become active citizens.

5.10 Summary

The findings presented above have provided answers about how university students view their civic experience and about how and through what kind of mass media they get involved in civic participation. Overall this suggests a strong tendency among the participants for supplementing the current university curriculum of citizenship learning with mass media use, especially new mass media, as participants have treated mass media as a main platform for their civic expression and civic participation. However, the findings also point out the reality including the limited frequency of political participation and the lack of obvious results between online activities and political participation. Therefore, this suggests that further research is required to explore potential barriers to students' media use and to identify how mass media can be used to support university students' effective engagements for democratic purposes. The analysis of the qualitative data from the interviews in the second research stage of this mixed methods research (See Chapter 6) will carry forward the discussion around the particular emerged themes from the quantitative findings.

Chapter Six Findings from the qualitative data

6.1 Introduction

Interviews provide the means by which participants can “express how they regard [any] situation from their own points of views” (Cohen et al., 2002, p.267). I then employed this method in my research with the intention to explore examples of participants’ personal civic experience and to disclose potential cultural factors contributing to their civic participation under the influence of the university citizenship curriculum and of mass media.

The design of interview questions and the administration of the interview process have been described in Chapter Four, whereas this chapter sets out to analyse the data obtained from the interviews carried out with twelve students in the sample university. Responses to the interview questions are illustrated mainly by quotations offered by respondents, and the analytical method of theme coding is also used. It aims to address the 5th and 6th auxiliary research question areas of this study: What motivates students to become involved in civic participation in the university and through the mass media? What obstacles do university students mention when talking about their civic experience through mass media? How do they deal with these obstacles? Finally, it aims to provide supplementary information for answering the central research questions.

The questionnaire data analysis in Chapter Five has shed light on research themes for further exploration, thus indicating the structure of the interview data analysis. Five sections are examined after this introduction section: the first section focuses on how students understand the terms of citizenship and civic participation; the second section reveals students’ motivations for their civic participation in the university; the third section reports students’ opportunities and barriers in their civic experience through mass media; the fourth section discusses how students’ backgrounds, especially the factor of political status, affects their patterns of civic participation. The last section deals with some new

emerging themes from the qualitative data.

6.2 University students' understanding of citizenship and civic participation

The quantitative findings in Chapter Five on the one hand revealed the comparatively high frequency of students' participation in relevant civic activities encouraged by the curriculum, such as voting in student union elections (60%), joining a community or voluntary organizations (66%) and donating money to poor people (71%) (See p.154). On the other hand, it showed students' main concern about limited civic participation opportunities within the university. These indicate the need for further understanding of what citizenship and civic participation mean to the population of university students in the sampled university.

6.2.1 Understanding of "citizenship"

The picture revealed from the questionnaire data has shown respondents' clear views of citizenship (See section 5.3.1): the option of "active participation in social affairs" scored the highest and the participants rarely chose the option of "I am not sure". Rather the interview data shows the variability and confusion in students' personal understanding of citizenship. Most participants confessed that they did not quite understand the precise meaning of citizenship although they came across this term from time to time. Participants stated:

Teachers did not explain much about this term. I just treat it as an abstract term for examination. I think it is mainly related to the responsibility of patriotism, socialism, and collectivism for Chinese people. (04, M, S)

The term of "citizenship" is commonly used and discussed in the western context, but I do not know its exact meaning in the Chinese context. It is equivalent to "Gongmin" in Chinese. Maybe it has the same meaning as "Renmin" [the people] or "Qunzhong" [the working class people]. (01, F, S)

Citizenship is a political term. It is not associated with students' life. (05, F, A)

Such comments mirror the immature citizenship curriculum in universities discussed in

Chapter 3. The notion of “citizenship” is not emphasized in the university curriculum, rather it is pointed out as citizenship morality education, and it aligns more closely with the dimension of moral education.³²

While most participants showed less understanding of this notion, two participants made clearer remarks on this term. For instance, one participant (07, F, A) expressed that citizenship means rights and responsibilities in a certain society, and university students are entitled to have relevant rights. In addition, one student made radical comments on citizenship related to the Chinese context.

Citizenship means democracy and freedom, and citizens have the individual rights in society. We are taught about Marxism and communism in ideological and political education, but I think this is not citizenship education in the real sense, as it is unable to provide particular knowledge of relevant civic terms.
(11, F, S)

These comments reflect Kennedy and Fairbrother’s (2004) argument in Chapter 4 that students are active learners of citizenship education, and they would probably react to what is offered to them. Thus, it turns out that some students are indeed making critical comments on current citizenship education in universities.

6.2.2 Understanding of civic participation

I asked participants what they would associate with the term of civic participation. It is surprising to find that they were more confident to give their accounts of this term compared to their understanding of citizenship. Four keywords generally emerged from their responses to this question: involvement, political elections, social affairs and making a difference. For instance, the participant (06, M, A) believed that civic participation is related to involvements in making social policy decisions. Citizens should be entitled to the freedom and respect to make suggestions for social developments. Some other participants

³² For example, Ao (2013) pointed out the misunderstanding of citizenship in citizenship education in Chinese universities. There is no specific description of “citizenship education” in most educational dictionaries in China, and “citizenship” is just added in front of the notion of “moral education”.

expressed similar ideas.

Civic participation means citizens' participation in political and social affairs: such as taking part in political elections, bail hearing, and discussion for social policies. (03, F, A)

It is the requirements of democracy in modern societies, as people are entitled to express ideas on particular occasions about politics and social affairs. (10, M, A)

Public issues such as environment problems are interrelated with individual interests. Civic participation should be encouraged among ordinary citizens, where they are entitled to rights to express own stands and protect own rights. (11, F, S)

Peoples' effective involvements in civic participation can contribute to social improvements. (02, F, A)

In addition, participants were generally concerned about university students' situation in civic participation. For example, the participant numbered as 12 (F, A) said that university students are always neglected in civic participation, and their voices are not seriously considered. Similar ideas were expressed by most participants:

Although we are encouraged to take part in certain kinds of social activities in the university, I do not think they are of civic participation sense. We were told to conform to certain rules, and different voices would be dismissed. I do not think that the university administration team is promoting real civic participation on campus. (12, F, A)

Most campus activities are related to the CPC, and thus they are well organized and highly supported by the university. However, I do not think we can express different ideas, and our ideas would never make a change in any university decision. (07, F, A)

It will be difficult for university students to play an effective role in society, and I do not think we can make some changes even though we take part in relevant social activities. In addition, it is really impossible for us to attend political participations such as national voting. (06, M, A)

6.2.3 University students' civic intention

The interview results generally show that students are concerned about public benefits, and they have the sense to improve themselves, to think about the society and to contribute to its further progress. It thus shows that this aspect is consistent with the questionnaire findings. Specifically, the majority of participants responded that they have interests in politics and they would like to vote if they were given an opportunity. For instance, the outputs below showed students' civic intention.

We tend to be concerned about the development of our country. I hope I can have the opportunity to get in touch with governmental officials, such as phoning or writing letters to voice my opinions. (04, M, S)

Teachers or the society just treat us like children who are alienated from politics. However, as a university student, I have developed my own viewpoints about the society. (10, M, A)

I enjoyed getting involved in some social activities, and I am really interested to know what is going on in the social and political process. However, teachers taught little about this area. (05, F, A)

To summarize, the qualitative data reveals students' confusion of the term "citizenship". However, when it comes to being connected with a concrete verb of "participate", it is understood more clearly among the participants. The meaning of civic participation is perceived comprehensively including factors of citizens' expression, political and social affairs and making differences. This indicates that the ideal meaning of civic participation which is understood among the participants is generally consistent with the understanding in the western context analysed in Chapter Two (See section 2.3.1). In addition, participants also showed the eagerness of their civic concern and civic intention. However, university students also showed their concern about the real situation of civic participation, as they were not provided with enough opportunities for such idealized and authentic civic participation. Therefore, the contradiction observed between students' ideals of civic participation and participation opportunities that exist in practice helped to understand the quantitative finding discussed at the beginning of this section.

6.3 University students' civic experience in the university curriculum

Students' specific civic experience encouraged by the curriculum and the university is explored in this section. Research focus is placed on such questions as what kind of civic activities do students prefer to attend. Is it possible to identify a similar motivation for civic participation among the interview participants?

6.3.1 General dissatisfaction with ideological and political education

In contrast to participants' two-sided but overall marginally positive attitudes revealed in the questionnaire, the overall response to the focus on ideological and political curriculum is negative from the interviews. These are two representative answers from the participants: "we cannot learn updated information about the social and civic situation from this curriculum;" (03, F, M) "The contents of textbooks are old and unattractive; we are hardly greatly influenced by a few lessons of political studies." (08, M, S)

One student (10, F, A) commented: "the textbooks were composed in the 1990s, and students have been learning the same material for almost twenty years. As a student in 2000s, we are facing a different situation. It is ridiculous that we are only asked to memorize those political guides and historical events related to the CPC development." I then mentioned to this student that the current ideological and political curricula were newly revised in 2006, but she replied that: "I do not perceive significant changes in textbooks, as contents are always around maxims, socialism and the CPC's political doctrine." Another student (07, F, A) expressed the same concern that she did not understand why Marxist philosophy was placed at the most important place in Chinese university curriculum.

Besides respondents' dissatisfaction with the contents of ideological and political education, some students also commented on its teaching methods.

We could sometimes come across the terms such as democracy and civic participation in class. Teachers did not explain much and were more likely to

relate those terms to the requirements of socialism development in China. To us, they are just abstract concepts. (11, F, S)

Teachers do not care about whether we have understood or not, and all they do is to make sure we could memorize relevant points for examinations. (05, F, A)

When asking how they are going to react to ideological and political education, the majority of the respondents said they would just accept this situation. From my experience of personal undergraduate and postgraduate studies in China, I was not surprised to receive this response as I know there is little that ordinary university students could do to change the situation. It is the reality that all students need to learn this curriculum as requested by the educational system. Many interview participants echoed this situation: “This curriculum is set up by the CPC with the intention to pass values of patriotism, socialism, loyalty to the party and collectivism among new generations; therefore it will not be replaced in a short time.” (05, F, A) “This curriculum accounts for a crucial part in the examinations for attending postgraduate studies in China. I have decided to pursue a master’s degree, so I am trying my best to memorize its contents.” (07, F, A) “Although I am not interested in this curriculum, I still spend loads of time memorizing its contents for my final examinations.” (04, M, S)

It can be observed that although the CPC-led government is undergoing decentralization reforms in the new century, the Party-state still attempts to strengthen its regulating role in students’ values rather than allowing it to weaken (Mok, 2005). Ideological and political education is underpinned as a crucial part of university students’ study. Nevertheless, the results show that university students’ involvements in these curricula are not based on their own willingness, rather the participants generally considered ideological and political education as a site where the Party-state is exerting its regulating and coordinating role in the higher education system.

However, it is found that two interviewees showed some positive feelings and opinions towards the curriculum. For instance, one participant (06, M, A) described his interests in Marxism philosophy and politics and appreciated the advocating of people’s strength and

importance in the CPC's doctrines. Another student (01, F, S) thought this curriculum could provide historical knowledge and bring merit resources to university students, such as integrity, love and sacrifice.

6.3.2 University students' campus activities

Three types of university activities are mainly identified from the interviews: acting as elected student leaders, involvements in activities related to academic study and involvements in students' organizations embedded in everyday life.

The first type is acting as student leaders in their classes, colleges, student unions, the CYLC and the CPC branches.³³ Those leaders are mainly elected by teachers and the university administration and appointed to organize curriculum-related activities or party-related activities among university students. The Party has always regarded the recruitment of young intellectuals, especially university students, as a crucial part of its expansion strategy since its establishment (Guo, 2007). Teachers often directly appoint a student leader for the CPC branch with the intention to build an interconnected network of the Party organizations with branches being set up at every level in each institution. For instance, a participant talked about his experience as a member of the CPC as follows:

I had the opportunity to join the CPC at the high school. I was assigned to be the Party Secretary without any election by the teacher when I entered the university. My primary responsibility is to attend Party-related meetings, pass relevant central policies to students, provide training to future party members and organize political study groups. I think the underlying tone of those activities is to foster patriotism and collectivism. (06, M, A)

Another student (03, F, S) provided some detailed examples of civic activities organized by the CPC branch in the university.

³³ There are no equivalent positions for students in the western universities. The corresponding terms for these positions in English language can be described as: secretary of the Youth League Branch Committee and the CPC who acts as a leader organizing party-related activities; a chief leader in Students' Union and classes who is in charge with relevant affairs; leaders for study matters, arts matters, and daily life matters who are in charge with particular affairs related to study, arts and daily life.

We had a series of activities around the theme of the 30th Year Anniversary of Economic Reform and the 60 Year Anniversary of the Establishment of the P.R.C, and those activities were all well supported by the university. My main task is to organize tours to some war historical sites and encourage students to write a paper on themes such as patriotism and socialism. However, I found it was not too easy to get ordinary students engaged in such party-related activities, as most students think those activities are meaningless with superficial formalism. (03, F, S)

A student (05, F, A) who is not a member of CPC expressed her concerns of such political study meetings: “I am not very interested in those boring meetings of political studies. I attended once last time, and was asked to talk about our improvements under the influence of the CPC and Marxism.” Another student (10, M, A) also had the same opinion: I think those party-related activities are away from our daily lives. They are constrained in certain domains and ignore some practical issues.” It could be observed that participants showed less interest personally to participate in party-related activities.

The second type is participants’ involvements in activities related to their academic study. Participants expressed that they would like to attend lectures or activities which are related to their majors, as they believed these activities would be helpful for their study and widen their knowledge horizon. For instance, a student (05, F, A) studying politics said that she went to a lecture on social justice and came to know critical comments from other scholars.

The third type of the university activities is the participation in student organizations which are organized by students themselves. Most participants gave their experience of leisure activities embedded in daily lives and reported attendance in a number of different students’ associations out of their diverse personal interests such as animal protection, speech and debate association, sports association and piano association. In addition, almost all respondents emphasized the personal benefits of joining a student organization. For instance, one informant (09, F, A) summarized general views:

It could be said that if you have never joined in a student organization in the

university, you do not have a complete university life. Student organizations operate like a micro-society, and we could make friends, learn skills and develop communication skills preparing for stepping into the society. (09, F, A)

Meanwhile, it is important to note that five students reported their involvements in public affairs. Specifically, they mentioned their participation in youth voluntary associations, such as providing lectures to children of migrant workers, campaigns for snow storm relief donation, fundraising for kids suffering sight disability and visiting local primary schools. 11 (F, A) shared her experience: “I joined the Pigeon Youth Voluntary Association based in this university, and we provided help to street children, visited old people and raised money for people in need.”

In sum, the interview findings show that the participants reported their experience in major-related activities, student organizations and some broader civic activities such as joining in voluntary organizations. However, the participants did not mention explicit political participation experience in the campus. In addition, the interview data show participants’ low interests in party-related activities.

6.3.3 Motivation for participation in university activities

The finding in Li’s (2009) research shows that the majority of students value civic responsibility as the foremost motivation when engaging in civic society. However, almost all interview participants in this study built their answers to their motivation for university activities around one central purpose: the consideration of individual developments, which is related to the development of future career, social skills and personal benefits. There is a general feeling from the interviews that most students cared a lot about personal gains which could be potentially brought by attendance in university activities.

Half of the interview participants were Party members, and most of them acknowledged the existence of potential benefits for their future career as a Party member. For instance, 11 (F, S) expressed that: “as a member of the CPC, I was given more opportunities to

attend university-level meetings and activities, which would be a good part in my CV for job hunting. Many students envy me very much.” One interviewee (08, M, S) provided the same viewpoints:

I want to work as a college assistant when I graduate. I once checked the qualification information for this job and found that being a Party member is the foremost condition. Therefore, I tried my best to join in the CPC in order to be qualified. The first thing I need to do is to take part in some campus activities organized by the Party branches.” (08, M, S)

Participants who were not Party members mentioned potential benefits of taking part in party activities. “Although I am not interested in party-related activities, I still try to attend because it would add some credits to my annual grades.” (01, F, S) “I would like to attend party-related activities as I may have the chance to know some powerful students leaders or teachers.” (05, F, A) In this connection, these responses help to depict a comprehensive picture of students’ attitudes towards party-related activities: although they expressed little interests, they would take part in party-related activities based on the consideration of personal developments.

The investigation of university students’ main motivation for joining the Party shows that the efforts to force the Party’s ideology on students are in fact found to be mainly ineffective (Guo, 2007). The results resonate with a former research study that competing for joining the CPC among students is not a result of their commitment to communism or the desire to serve the people and society, but to make themselves more welcomed when applying for jobs (Guo 2007; Zhang 2002).

Two interviewees expressed different ideas, thus indicating a picture of mixed motivation for campus activities.

As a university student, I need to care about the society, and contribute my little efforts. (09, F, A)

I would like to attend some voluntary organizations because it can help people

who are in need. I will feel happy to help others. We have the obligations to care for our country and the society. Maybe not everyone thinks the same. There is a group of volunteers aiming for fame and personal benefits. (02, M, A)

To summarize, students mainly talked about their routine participation in the CPC celebration meetings, the CPC discussion meetings and social activities of helping others encouraged by the university, and they were generally motivated to participate in those university activities by their consideration for personal developments. This is especially reflected by the utilitarian tone in students' application for being members of the CPC. However, it also indicates among two university students different aspects of motivation for civic participation such as serving the public. Therefore, sacrifice and contribution to the socialist cause is not the solely expected motivation for civic activities among this sample of university students, while "pursuing personal benefits while serving the public good" might be an appropriate way to depict the picture (Tu, 2011). They tend to pay attention to individual developments and daily experience, which is consistent with the research conducted by Shen, Lei and Zhou (2006) that university students tend to build more individualist, practical and critical values in their civic participation.

6.4 Students' opportunities for and barriers to their civic experience under the influence of mass media

One of the primary purposes of this study is to examine how university students exercise citizenship through mass media. The quantitative data has generally proved the positive relationship between university students' civic participation and their use of certain types of mass media. In this section, examples of participants' personal civic experience and potential cultural factors contributing to their civic participation through mass media are further explored from the interview data.

6.4.1 Students' purposes in using mass media

Consistent with the quantitative findings, interview participants also showed positive attitudes towards mass media and their choice of mass media in civic learning. Almost all interviewees responded that they preferred to acquire civic knowledge through mass media.

Some representative views are listed as follows:

There is no doubt that the university curriculum and campus activities have done something good in our civic understanding, but the fact is that the information from mass media can impress me most. We are taught about the abstract concepts of civic values: democracy, civic participation and social cohesion. It is really hard to motivate to real actions because I do not fully understand those terms. However, mass media gives me a vivid picture to think about those issues. (11, F, S)

I tend to develop my own perspective to the social issues from my daily experiences; in particular, the information from mass media motivates me a lot. (08, M, S)

I read people's discussion about the public transportation problem in Beijing and the recent air pollution on my micro blogging account. Some discussion has gone beyond the superficial level but tried to dig out the governmental responsibility for these social problems. I feel more informed through mass media, as textbooks are just of abstract terms. (05, F, A)

The informants above generally claimed that they have got fairly good or even better understanding of civic issues based on knowledge absorbed outside of the curriculum, and the mass media appeared to be a potent source of civic knowledge in their current study lives.

6.4.2 Students' civic opportunities under mass media

Participants' specific civic experience under mass media is explored in this section with the intention to reveal potential reasons why they prefer to exercise citizenship through mass media.

Almost all participants talked about their civic experience through social networks, and they used keywords such as "forum" and "platform" to describe their experience. For instance, 09 (F, A) stated that the social network has acted as a new and direct forum for self-expression and social communication. She continued to explain: "we used to be kept in the ivory tower by the university curriculum, but now if I want to express some different

ideas, I can easily post a discussion topic on my micro blogging account. If I @ some famous accounts, it is likely to arouse heated discussion nationwide. ” Many participants expressed similar views:

I care about political and social affairs. It would be the occasion that I cannot discuss some topics with my family and teachers, but I could find discussion groups on the micro-blogging account, and people from different corners can share their ideas simultaneously. It is cool! (02, M, S)

One of my teachers recommended us to follow some famous economists’ micro-blogging such as Li Yining and Yu Xiaonian³⁴, as he believes that compared with those contents delivered by the official mass media, the information on the micro-blogging is updated fast and could provide a critical and profound understanding of the economic situation in China. (07, F, A)

I could see totally different comments towards a same event on the micro-blogging. For example, when the official news media are describing the domestic tourism development during National holidays, on the micro-blogging people are expressing their opinions about transportation jam and government management. It provides a different perspective to think about social issues. (11, F, S)

Besides getting more information from social networks, the research also suggests that some participants employed social networks such as “Sina weibo” (See Section 1.1.2) to fight for personal rights. For instance, the participant (09, F, A) talked about her experience: “I found that the university restaurants were selling food of bad quality to students, and then I posted a message to complain the situation, My message was clicked and circulated widely by students and finally was noticed by the university administration departments who then urged the restaurant to improve the food.” In addition, those who were keen to express their views and were interested in social topics tended to make more use of social networks. The participant (09, F, A) said she would continue to engage in this kind of participatory action to protect university students’ rights.

³⁴ These two persons are famous economists in China. Unlike economists employed by the mainstream media, they tend to speak truth about Chinese economic problems and have won popularity among university students recently.

A majority of interviewees stressed the important role of the Internet in terms of their civic experience. 06 (M, A) expressed that the BBS (Bulletin Board System) on the Internet is a kind of online public sphere to express students' personal opinions and to communicate with a larger group of citizens on specific issues. Ten out of twelve participants in this research mentioned the university-sponsored BBS on this campus, which has a lovely name "DanDan," with the same meaning of "eggs" in English. An interviewee (11, F, S) stated that:

It is my routine to check the information on DanDan website every day, and I guess every student on this campus uses it. Some graduates still have the habit to visit this website at times. I could get much useful and updated information about campus activities and voluntary social organizations. It is like an online community, and students in the campus can discuss and communicate with each other. (11, F, S)

Another participant (01, F, S) pointed out the potential reason why this website is popular: "There is no free wifi service on the campus and the wired internet flow in dormitories is controlled by certain limits per month. Thanks to DanDan, we have free access to internet resources on the campus."

Surprisingly, the participants generally responded that they rarely watched TV in the university, as there was no TV access in their dormitories; the only way to watching live videos is to go online. However, they complained that the internet fee was rather expensive in the dormitories, and the internet data was controlled at a certain level, so it means that it is impossible to watch the unlimited flow of video on the campus. In this situation, most participants expressed that they would always have a general plan of how to locate the internet flow per month. Participants put it like this:

I rarely follow many entertainment programs when I am studying at the university due to the limited internet access. However, I always follow an entertainment program called "looking for jobs," because it simulates the interview process in job hunting, and I could get useful advice. What I have learnt is that cooperation and participation is critical for a job. Therefore, it motivates me to get involved in some social activities to develop my ability. I

attended a training camp for undergraduates last winter holiday, and it impressed me a lot. (05, M, A)

I will never use the limited internet flow to watch all kinds of entertainment programs because most of them are just like junk food without much helpful information. I will choose to watch some programs or documentary movies of introducing travelling, food and animals, which could inform a lot of thinking about different culture and environmental protection. (04, M, S)

Four participants mentioned the role of movies in terms of their civic experience. For instance, 10 (M, A) stated that: “I attended the movie club on the campus. The movies are neatly selected for their instructional message, such as *Casablanca*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, and *50 Dates*. We could share ideas with each other after watching such movies. It could really innovate my thinking about life and the society.” Another student (02, F, S) mentioned the civic implications of documentary movies. She explained: “I watched the movie called “*Die Welle*” recommended by some public intellectuals on the social network, and I am impressed by the influence of democracy and monopoly in society, which leads me to think more about some social issues.”

Three participants mentioned the civic implications of entertainment programs and pop stars. For instance, the student (09, F, A) shared a specific example: “I would like to watch programs such as *Chinese Dream* shows, *Equality and Laws* and *the Focus*, which would give more fresh and updated information as well as deep perspectives. I would always be motivated to think about what I should do in the society and what we young people should do to improve social operation.” In addition, a student (10, M, A) talked about his travelling to Tibet in the summer holiday:

I applied to the activity of “People Helping Tibet” organized by a famous singer in China. I have the real experience to see people suffering there and have the opportunity to help them by myself. What I have learned from this activity is how to help others and how to love others. It is important that relevant infrastructure should be approved by the government, and the central government needs to show more concern for people living in those areas. I have to say that the primary stimulus for me to take part in this activity is that I want to meet that singer, but at last I found it is meaningful to see that some

singers in China do their best to help the people in need.”

Another student also shared his experience with an entertainment competition:

I have to say that the adaptation of “audience vote” in some star competitions has stimulated people’s awareness of voting and equality. Students will talk about whether the competition is equal, and they will encourage those who failed by posting their discussion online. It indicates that students are willing to participate in more democratic and equal process. (05, M, A)

To summarize, the participants mainly talked about their civic experience under social networks, movies and entertainment activities, as they believed those types of mass media could provide a forum for expression and discussion of civic knowledge. These findings are consistent with the quantitative data, and would enrich the quantitative findings by adding specific explanations. In addition, the interview data generally reveals the positive implications of the Internet for citizenship understanding and civic competency among most participants. Although it seems that this result is inconsistent with the questionnaire finding, it provides explanations that certain online activities with a clear purpose of studying or using communication could be positively related with broad civic participation.

6.4.3 Students’ barriers to civic participation under mass media

The analysis above has confirmed the civic implications of mass media among university students, as the interview data shows that mass media, especially new media, has provided platforms for students to learn, discuss and meditate on civic issues. However, the participants rarely mentioned their experience of political participation. Similarly, the questionnaire data revealed that students do not have the same levels of involvement between political participation and broader civic participation. Specifically, less than 20% of participants reported their experiences of political participation such as national voting, which is far less compared with the percentage of students involved in broader social participation such as discussion and communication about social affairs, which is 70%.

Some participants mentioned the existence of media censorship in China. Participants

reported that they could feel that some sensitive information was prohibited or removed by the Internet operator, thus they sometimes could not get full information of a social event.

A participant (09, F, A) talked about her experience:

I once saw a title “10 problems you could never image existing in Chinese governments”. I thought it would probably be related to democratic issues in China. However, when I clicked the link, it showed the contents had been removed for containing some sensitive information. (09, F, A)

Many participants echoed such experience, and they expressed their unwillingness to trust the information which is released by the mainstream mass media. Nevertheless, most participants pointed out that they could find alternative ways to get rid of media censorship and establish online discussion. For instance, a student (10, M, A) said: “students generally have the software to break through the firewall, and get the information they want.” This indicates that media censorship does not always constrain students’ online discussions.

The interview data shows that almost half of the participants expressed their hesitation towards carrying out real civic actions. In other words, they preferred to read and discuss public issues online, but did not become involved in further corresponding participation offline. Participants provided different accounts. One reason pointed out is the lack of relevant supports from teachers and the society. For instance, one participant (06, M, A) said: “Although the mass media let me know more immediate information about civic issues and encourage me to participate, I rarely took part in civic activities, because there are not too many social organizations running civic activities for students.” Many other students stated the same lines:

Teachers always think it is a waste of time and energy to get involved in activities heard from mass media, as they think it is full of fake information. Considering the busy studying schedule, I just follow and read information online, and would think twice to take my civic actions. (10, M, A)

I used to attend a social activity called “The development of Young People Worldwide” sponsored by some social organizations, which I came to notice from the social network. Its propaganda aim is to help young people express

their ideas and develop their ambitions. However, it turns out as social gatherings with talking and drinking. To me, it is not well organized and offers little help. (02, M, A)

I do not know how to participate in political elections. We sometimes are asked to vote for People's Representatives, but we are given little information about those candidates. (06, M, A)

In addition, participants expressed their worries over information from mass media, and they expressed difficulty in determining what is reliable.

I have to face a vast sea of information from TV, my social network and websites. You always need to be cautious when dealing with particular information, because some news is made up in order to win the reading rate. For instance, a piece of news that some suspicious terrorist people from Xinjiang have swept into Beijing was forwarded thousands of times in social networks just a few days after the 3.1 Xinjiang Terrorist incident, but it turned out to be fake news. (07, F, A)

Not all information on the internet is reliable. Students may need some guides from teachers to tell the information. (04, M, S)

Some students declared themselves reluctant to take part in any political activities for the reason that they do not think their participation would have any influence or make a difference to national and social policies, which is illustrated by the quotations as follows:

Sometimes we were called to elect for local government committees, but it is not well organized but rather informal. It is just a procedure for show and the result has already been settled. (08, M, S)

We are so far away from the politics. As university students, we are not treated as the subjects of political activities. Political leaders will not take our ideas and decisions seriously. (12, F, A)

It is not surprising to find that the limited chances of political participation appear to be another important factor, which in some degree can be also inferred from the literature review of the national context in China. A student (11, F, S) who has a strong desire to get involved in political activities expressed his disappointments:

Actually I want to know more about how the government operates, however, the access to political participation is actually limited. We do not have the real chances to vote. We can take part in civic activities related to the Party, but they just stay at the surface level. If we organize or attend some active social activities, it would be very sensitive. For example, many local people went to protest in front of the government against the introduction of PX program in Dalian several years ago. However, some people were caught, and that area was blocked. The news on the mainstream media mentioned little about the events and even criticized those people as mobs. After several months, that poisonous program was still built. It is the decision from the higher level, and we can do nothing to change that. We students are warned not to attend that kind of activity.

Another student (08, M, S) who is a member of the CPC also expressed the same feeling: “as a member of the CPC, we comparatively have more opportunities for political participation than other students, but what we really do is to listen to what the leaders are talking about, and then pass those ideas to other students in classes.” A participant (10, M, A) made more direct comments on such activities:

Although I always participate in activities organized by the Chinese Communist Youth League, I do not think it could be called kind of civic participation in the political sense. Most activities are related to voluntary community activities such as looking after the old, helping children or picking up waste in parks. We cannot deny the moral implications of these activities, but I just want to do something else where our youth voice can be heard. However, such chances are really limited. (10, M, A)

Surprisingly, media censorship did not appear to be a powerful barrier among the participants as participants have used creative ways to cope with it. To summarize, students mainly pointed out four aspects of obstacles to their offline civic participation: lack of relevant supports, inability to filter vast information from mass media, inability to make a difference and limited access to formal participation. Compared to the participants’ creative image online, their weak positions offline in real lives resulting from the above mentioned barriers may be tougher and more challenging.

6.5 Students' background characteristics as factors affecting patterns of civic participation

The questionnaire findings identified certain factors such as gender, educational level, educational background and political status as significant mediators of the relation between mass media use and civic participation. The interview data further explores how students' individual background factors influence their civic participation and mass media use by highlighting students' actual civic experience.

6.5.1 Gender and educational level as factors affecting mass media use and civic participation

According to participants' statements, the differences across gender and grades in the use of social networks are significant. Female students reported their more frequent use of social networks, and relevant offline activities followed. For instance, most female students described their online shopping experience through social networks:

Online sellers will provide a lower price if a product is bought in large amounts. I always set up a discussion group online for a particular product, and students who are interested would join the group. Then I would place an order for the products in large numbers at a good price. When the order arrives, I contact with other students and deliver it to them face to face. I came to know more friends and we can organize activities together (11, F, S).

In addition, the particular year levels in universities also make a different impact on students' use of social networks and civic participation. Lack of time is the most frequent explanation among the participants. 01 (F, A) noted that as a first-year university student, she had to cover nine compulsory courses each semester, and time was very tight. Another student (12, F, A) in her fourth year also stated that she was busy looking for jobs, and she had no spare time for attending civic activities.

6.5.2 Subject discipline as a factor affecting mass media use and civic participation

The factor of subject discipline has an influence on students' choices of mass media use, as well as what kind of civic activities they would like to participate in. Lack of time is a common explanation for science students. For instance, 01 (F, S) noted that as a science student she has a heavy load of courses and lab assignments, therefore, she neither watched entertainment programs nor used social networks, whereas she would like to follow social issues by watching the serious news at times. 08 (M, S) also expressed that he didn't spend much time on mass media use, as he needs to concentrate on studies with designing experiments. On the contrary, participants majoring in arts provided totally different responses. "I always watch some English movies and use social networks, because it is a way to get in touch with society and receive updated social news" (10, M, A).

Most of the participants made their choices of activities related to their majors. Compared with their peers in arts, students in science who claimed to have heavier assignments and busier schedules tended to participate less. For instance, 11 (F, S) commented that the future professions of arts students probably require them to do more communication and interaction work and develop more social skills, thus they are more likely to engage in some social activities. Another student (04, M, S) agreed and expressed that he is willing only to attend some science competitions instead of campus activities such as singing, debating and sports games. To him, attending those leisure activities is a waste of time. Referring to the quantitative finding that participants major in science are more likely to attend civic activities under the influence of social networks (See section 5.8.3), the qualitative findings show that this educational background difference is not absolute or constant.

6.5.3 Political status as a factor affecting mass media use and civic participation

The interview data shows that students who are Party members reported more experience

with campus activities compared to other students. As depicted above, 11 (F, S) expressed that: “as a member of the CPC, I am given more opportunities to attend university-level meetings and activities.” In addition, some Party members stated that they were more likely to be invited to certain activities by other Party members. “As Party members, we have meetings together every month, and it is easy to receive relevant information about civic activities.” (08, M, S) This student continued to mention that it is Party members who are entitled to attend certain activities, such as a national discussion forum and voting at national CPC meetings. A participant (02, F, A) who is not a Party member stated that: “Party members seem to be superior to us, and they sometimes try to exclude us ordinary students from certain party-related activities, as the participation number is limited.”

It could be observed from the interview data in this research that the Party members are more likely to attend party-related activities than the general public. In addition, it is the unavoidable fact that Party members have more opportunities to get in touch with political issues such as elections. However, it does not show whether those Party members do engage in civic activities in practice.

6.6 New emerging themes

Besides themes related to the quantitative findings, the qualitative data also reveals three aspects of new emerging themes, which are also related to the overall research aims of this study.

6.6.1 Students’ attitudes towards mainstream media

The quantitative data showed that participants reported little time spent on mainstream media such as CCTV news and reading newspaper. In interviews, students further provided relevant accounts for this situation. “I rarely watch CCTV news, as it is kind of formalism with contents of communism and socialism.” (04, M, S) “The contents in The People’s Daily are unattractive.” (07, F, A)

However, the observation also reveals that some students are complimentary on certain media products operated under the mainstream media. For instance, one student (08, M, S)

mentioned a TV program called “Voice”³⁵ on Channel 1 of CCTV and noted it was an improvement, as it delivered values of patriotism, participation and dreams to the youth in a successful way. Another student (10, M, A) expressed the similar idea: “this program is of high quality with credible information and positive values.” In addition, some students talked about the micro blogging account of some mainstream media such as The People’s Daily and CCTV news. “I follow the account of The People’s Daily on my micro blogging account, and I think its reporting tone is different from the paper media, rather it discusses social affairs in a casual way and replies to our comments.” (07, F, A) Therefore, the interview data reveals that students came to pay attention to what media content would actually bring to them, and they would not completely turn their backs to all kinds of mainstream media.

6.6.2 The importance of social capital for civic participation

In the interviews, participants responded that they were more likely to take part in civic activities if they were accompanied or invited by friends. A participant (04, M, S) said that: “If I cannot find someone else who could accompany me, I would be reluctant to take part. Sometimes I felt alone and less supported.” Participants especially mentioned the influence of the Internet and social networks, where they could discuss with lots of old friends and establish relations with new friends. For instance, a student (02, F, A) stated that: “It is impossible for ordinary students to meet with some famous scholars face to face, whereas the internet opens up opportunities for connecting with people and receiving more information. Another participant (04, M, S) shared his experience that:

I followed a commentator on my social network account, and sometimes I sent private messages to the commentator expressing my views on social issues. Surprisingly, he replied and we discussed occasionally. (04, M, S)

In addition, some participants pointed out the importance of supports received from some social organizations. For instance, one student (09, F, A) stated: “I once tried to attend an

³⁵ The entertainment program called “Voice” is broadcasted on the Channel 1 of CCTV. It invites celebrities from all kinds of walk to deliver a speech to students. Thus, it aims to pass positive strength to students such as cooperation, ambition, and responsibility.

activity organized by the university committee, but I failed. I then came to find that the organizer easily recommended his friends to take part in the activity. ” Therefore, it could explain that social capital works here in access to certain civic activities, which could promote students’ civic consciousness into real civic actions.

6.6.3 Students’ description of the university atmosphere

It is observed from the interviews that some students talked about the influence of this university itself on their development of civic perceptions and civic participation. The output below reflected this:

The motto of my university is “Learn, so as to instruct others; act, to serve as an example to all”, which works as a guideline for us students. It always reminds me to be a good person with merits. In addition, it teaches me the meaning of contributing to the society. (06, M, A)

I am glad to study at this university. Besides its high reputation in China, it provides students a pure studying environment. Its long history and thorough culture encourages me to meditate more on daily things. (03, F, A)

Most of the students in this university aim to be teachers in their career life. They care about educational policies, social affairs and civic issues, with the intention of contributing to their country. It was recorded that it was the centre of educational reforms in the late Qing Dynasty. What’s more, students from this university were the volunteers in 1989 Tiananmen Square event. Therefore, it shows that this university has enjoyed a long history of active student activities. (10, M, A)

It is an open and free campus here. We organize our own social activities and set up students’ clubs. I like this energetic and vibrant university life very much. (06, M, A)

6.7 Conclusions

I used the quantitative findings to organize this part of the analysis, and I have analysed the interviewees’ stated civic experience under the university curriculum and mass media in this chapter. To sum up, I overall can present seven aspects of the qualitative findings:

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1. I have shown that although participants' understanding of citizenship is not very clear and primarily related to moral education, they declare a confident understanding of civic participation and a high sense of civic intention. Involvement in political and social affairs, expression of their own voices and making differences constitute the participants' understandings of civic participation. However, this kind of idealistic civic participation is argued to be limited to students' personal lives within their university.
 2. Although the university atmosphere in this studied university is found to have an important impact on students' civic participation, the real configuration of civic experience in the university curriculum is found to be unsatisfactory among the participants. Participants expressed their general dissatisfaction with ideological and political education in terms of its contents and teaching methods. In addition, participants felt that the university failed to provide enough support for their participation, as the desirable civic participation cannot be observed in practice.
 3. Participants' involvements in the Party-related activities are greatly encouraged by the curriculum framework and the university, and participants reported their attendance in spite of their low interests in these kinds of activities. Therefore, it on the one hand significantly reflects that students' motivation for civic participation in the university is mainly based on concerns about their personal benefits; it, on the other hand, indicates that the CPC's primary aim of delivering communism and socialism among university students is challenged.
 4. When putting students' civic participation into a wider picture of the influence of mass media, it can be seen that their civic activities are not confined to the party-related domain, rather participants expressed the strong desire to contribute to society, especially on social equality issues. Their civic experience is characterized by pragmatism and is improving in terms of its quality, as they believe mass media, especially new mass media of the Internet and social networks, have provided a platform for their civic expression, civic discussion and their ideals of participation. In

addition, participants cited examples of the civic implications of entertainment programs and movies.

5. However, participants reported less offline civic participation. In addition, more participation in social discussion and voluntary organizations under mass media than formal political participation is observed. The interview findings reveal the participants' lack of participation in their offline lives, which results from four aspects of barriers to their offline civic participation: lack of relevant support, inability to filter vast information from mass media, inability to make differences and limited access to formal participation.
6. Party members are found to report more experience of Party-related activities. In addition, they tend to have some exclusive opportunities for civic activities such as elections. One of the reasons that could explain their participation is that they are more supported by the university and their peers in the Party organization. However, little evidence is obtained to show whether Party members are in fact more likely to take part in civic activities in practice.
7. The qualitative findings reflect the role of social capital in students' participation, which appears to be a new theme obtained in this research. Using social networks to communicate with new friends is helpful for bonding social capital online. In addition, being a Party member is useful for bridging social capital in the offline actual world. Therefore, it has been indicated that the focus on the influence of social capital on university students' civic participation is an important addition to the study and prompts examination of related literature which is presented in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven Stating and discussing related findings from the two stages of the empirical research

7.1 Introduction

I stated in Chapter Two that, from the literature, my understanding of cultural citizenship relates to its potential among university students for enhanced civic expression and local participation and its implications for citizenship education. The first of these with the help of mass media encourages students to express themselves freely and the second can support the analysis of and proposals for a broader framework for the citizenship education curriculum. The literature review in Chapter Two supports the proposition that mass media has the potential to promote civic engagement among young people. However, such a proposition is based on the fulfilment of two prerequisites: the quality of participation and the development of the public sphere, thus indicating the importance of situating the notion of cultural citizenship within a societal context. I drew attention to the context in China in Chapter Three, and it demonstrates a gap in the Chinese literature relating to active participation, the public sphere and the citizenship curriculum for the effective use of mass media. Therefore, the need for examining the influence of mass media in facilitating active participation among Chinese university students and particularly exploring how the Chinese context drives this process is highlighted.

While general findings have separately emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data in Chapters Five and Six, this chapter now draws together the two distinct phases of this mixed methods research. Efforts are made to provide an extended discussion of identified themes with the intention to develop a fuller understanding of the central research questions:

Does students' civic experience with mass media indicate the potential for cultural citizenship among Chinese university students?

If so, to what extent are relationships between mass media use and civic participation among university students in this study mediated or moderated by individual

characteristics and social contexts such as citizenship tradition, civic education experience, and the national context?

This chapter begins with the discussion of the perceived civic role of mass media, popular culture and social capital in Chinese university students' civic participation and civic learning. It then discusses their implications for the emerged attributes of cultural citizenship and citizenship learning in the Chinese context. It continues to note another research finding: the disconnection between students' ideals of civic participation and participation opportunities that exist in practice. This chapter then discusses reasons related to the proposed preconditions for cultural citizenship, which are citizenship tradition, civic education experience and the national context experienced by Chinese university students with the intention to examine which issues might encourage or restraint students' civic expression and civic participation in the context to which they were exposed,

7.2 Discussion of the perceived civic role of mass media

Both the questionnaire findings and the interview results in my study suggest that most of the participants acknowledged the contribution made by mass media in promoting their civic understanding and civic participation, thus confirming the proposition that mass media is an influential player in shaping Chinese university students' civic engagement and citizenship learning. This is generally consistent with some previous western media research that mass media use can exert a crucial influence in both political and civic socialization (John & Morris, 2004; McLeod, 2000; Pasek et al., 2006).

It is surprising to find out that entertainment media experiences such as entertainment TV programs and movies could contribute to enhancing students' civic understanding and civic participation. For instance, over 50% of the participants admitted that they could learn civic knowledge from some entertainment TV programs. The interview data provides additional evidence that some documentary movies have civic implications among the participants. These findings fail to conform to Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* thesis (Putnam, 2000), as Putnam regards the high consumption of television as a primary cause

of declining levels of social capital and civic engagement. On the contrary, this study provides evidence to support the argument that national news and entertainment shows on television are at least marginally related to civic activities (Romer et al., 2009). A possible explanation could be that the particular university context in China to some degree affects students' TV habits. Green and Hart (1999) contend that the ways in which participants describe their experiences and the ways in which the moderator works can depend on where empirical research such as interviews is held, indicating that the impact of university context could have altered the way in which university students respond to TV consumption. In this research, participants have demonstrated a clear purpose when choosing what kinds of TV programs to watch, and they have developed the habit of discussing with each other in their otherwise dull university lives, further contributing to understanding entertainment TV programs' positive civic implications among university students in this study.

The positive role of the Internet and social networks for civic engagement perceived in this study is consistent with former research in the western context. Scholars believe that the Internet is a new form of "liberation technology", and has provided a more direct and open forum for people to discuss, communicate and take actions for developing civic society (Diamond, 2010, p.70). Lee (2003) argues that exposure to the media is a significant factor for the development of citizenship understanding among students in Hong Kong during its transitional period from the UK to the People's Republic of China. In a similar vein, university students participating in this research have described their intimate personal use of the Internet to get in touch with social information as well as to engage with a larger community. The newly released Chinese Internet report in 2016 (CNNIC, 2016) reveals that there are 688 million Internet users in the country, and the largest group of users is people who are 20-29 years with a percentage of 29.9%. Therefore, there is some hope that new mass media use among young people in China would ultimately bring certain transformative changes to society and serve a major role in the negotiation with the Party-state for more democratic practices and citizenship education reforms.

The research reveals that most participants mainly mentioned their civic experience of online discussion, and they acknowledged that they could learn a lot from discussion with people through social networks. The perceived positive implications of online debate in this study are found to be inconsistent with the argument made by some scholars that the frequency of talking to others about issues makes no difference to civic participation such as voting (Couldry et al., 2006). However, other scholars also argue that “casual conversations and informal socializing are no trivial matter” (Zhang & Chia, 2006, p.293), but are important elements of “network recruitment” and create more opportunities for civic participation (Verba et al., 1995). Informal conversations, especially in social media usage, are important in the development of civic competence (Marques & Maia, 2010). In this connection, the finding in this study supports the latter argument. A possible explanation would be that young people in China tend to view informal participation in their everyday lives as main areas for civic expression and civic participation. Moreover, the participants admitted that online expression is an efficient way to urge the government to respond to their sentiments.

Some participants indicated the challenges of filtering vast amounts of information from the Internet, and they acknowledged the potentially negative effects of mass media. However, these findings do not weaken the argument in students’ minds that mass media provides a powerful supplementary platform for their civic learning and civic expression. Although state control over mass media is employed by the Chinese government, and no one could expect that the Internet could play exactly the same role in shaping public opinions in the Chinese context as it does in democratic settings according to the literature in Chapter Three, this research overall shows that university students have used creative ways to overcome the media censorship. Mass media is still able to serve as a means to widen the public sphere for open discussion and communication for university students, and to play a major role in shaping Chinese civil society under the gradually decentralized nature of the CPC (Tai, 2006).

7.3 The civic implications of popular culture

The typology of culture in China has been discussed in section 3.3.2, which introduces the existence of the mainstream culture and popular culture in the Chinese context. After analysing university students' mass media use in this study, it would provide some new insights to combine the landscape of mass media use with the typology of culture in China for the purpose of having a much clearer idea of what "culture" actually contributes to citizenship learning and civic participation among university students.

The literature review in Chapter Three revealed that the main content of Chinese mainstream culture is to propagandize socialism and communism among the ordinary people. Although it tends to absorb other sub-cultures worldwide under the tide of globalization, elements of socialism, communism and the Party have always been granted an important status. Nevertheless, the observed situation in this study would disappoint Chinese policy makers. It could be observed from the questionnaire that few students have developed the habit of paying attention to serious news such as CCTV news and newspapers, and in interviews they even admitted that they would keep away from the mainstream media as it functions as the propaganda machine for the mainstream culture. Qin (2011) argued that it is the lack of "a global context" that separates mainstream culture products away from people's humanitarian pursuits and aesthetic values.

Research on popular culture in China reviewed in Chapter Three generally focuses on its potentially negative influence and the need to regulate among university students. However, the findings disagree with the proposed worries and assumptions. Specifically, the questionnaire results show that the majority of the participants have developed a critical understanding of popular culture. In addition, students in interviews clearly pointed out that popular culture through some entertainment media experiences could bring them a fuller understanding of freedom, democracy, equality, and more ways for civic participation. In particular, most participants in this study spent considerable time on social networks, and the use of social networks has been deeply embedded in university students'

daily lives, which has become a great part of young people's popular culture.

On this basis, it seems hasty to draw the argument that popular culture in China has diverted public attention away from serious meditation on what is happening around but towards apolitical entertainment (Edwards & Jeffreys, 2010). In essence, popular culture has provided university students in China with an important platform to meditate on issues such as environmental quality, personal rights and consumer politics, which are emphasized in the framework of cultural citizenship (Bennett et al., 2009). Thus decrying popular culture for its separation from civic and political issues fails to acknowledge the fact that popular culture could also be constructed as a site of citizenship for certain social groups, and it could exert similar civic implications with formal politics (Burgess et al., 2006, p.2).

Some scholars have already inferred the necessity to eschew such kinds of criticisms towards popular culture (Edwards & Jeffreys, 2010, p.10). Civic participation now takes place everywhere, in people's homes, in schools and places of employment (Michael, 1998). In this connection, scholars have claimed the need for exploring the new direction in which the use of social media could relate to specific purposes of civic engagement with the intention to understand how young people construct their civic engagement through everyday political expression, involvements and peer discussions, rather than only to treat these activities as predictors of their offline participation such as voting (Davies et al., 2012).

Students' attempts to express their concerns and interests in civic issues through mass media revealed in this study is not planned but has rather gradually emerged as a youth sub-culture, which might even have the power to contest traditional formal political and social systems (Lin & Starkey, 2014). It is indeed lifestyle politics, which could start from tiny individual struggles and affairs, then maybe unconsciously be expressed as dissatisfaction and resistance to mainstream culture and the Party-state (Edwards & Jeffreys, 2010, p. 10), and eventually could lead to new forms of democratic politics

(Giddens, 1991). Meanwhile, some scholars in Mainland China have come to recognize the positive influence of popular culture and argued the necessity of making use of popular culture in teaching (Deng et al., 2005).

7.4 The influence of social capital on civic participation

As discussed in Chapter Four, although the factor of socio-economic status (SES) including social capital is an influential background factor for students' civic participation, explicit questions about students' economic status were not included in the employed questionnaire due to problems of sensitivity. However, although the findings presented in Chapters Five and Six cannot prove the direct relationship that the possession of social capital leads to a higher level of civic participation, they to some extent indicate the interplay between social capital and civic participation among university students in this study. For instance, the questionnaire data shows that social network use is positively related to students' broader civic participation. In addition, the interview data demonstrates that students are more likely to get involved in civic activities if they were invited, encouraged or recommended by friends and teachers.

Research on social capital mainly concentrates on examining its components such as social connectedness and trust (Zhang & Chia, 2006; Romer et al., 2009). Unfortunately, my study did not go far to clarify the concept of social capital and its major elements in the literature review. Meanwhile, participants' online habits related to these components were not examined particularly in the questionnaire design. Therefore, detailed information about the interplay between mass media, social capital and civic participation cannot be captured in this research. Further research could be conducted to examine both theories and empirical evidence related to how specific patterns of participants' online behaviours affect their civic engagement offline. However, it is still worth exploring how the factor of social capital generally works in students' civic participation in the Chinese context based on the current research findings. The interview data indicates the need for including the literature of social capital in understanding young people's civic participation, and so the following additions to the literary context are provided.

The concept of “social capital” is believed to be first termed by Hanifan (1916), and its importance for private benefits and sustaining democracy on a collective level is emphasized:

“When the people of a given community have become acquainted with each other and have formed a habit of coming together occasionally for entertainment, social intercourse and personal enjoyment, then by skilful leadership this social capital may easily be directed towards the general improvement of the community wellbeing” (Hainifan, 1916, p.130).

Putnam’s research (1995, 2000) has popularized this concept in recent years. For instance, Putnam (2000) stresses the importance of social networks and its rising social or interpersonal trust in enabling local or voluntary participation, which would further feed into a virtuous circle of civic engagement. Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995) contend that participation in voluntary associations is a strong predictor of political participation. It is indicated that this theoretical approach to social capital and civic participation actually emphasizes the potential of social networks and cooperative actions for enhancing the community.

There are other two distinct theoretical approaches of social capital making attempt to explain the relation between social capital and civic participation. Bourdieu’s (1986) approach focuses on unequal access to resources and capitals based on people’s economic status. Coleman (1990) provides a third approach grounded in individual rational choice theory to understand people’s collective social actions. It presumes that all human behaviours result from individuals’ standing points for pursuing their own interests, if necessary at the expense of others. Therefore, Coleman (1990) emphasizes the importance of holding individuals or organizations responsible for their actions. In this regard, the interplay among SES, social capital and civic participation is proposed on the rationale that higher social status has often been hypothesized as positively related to greater resources in terms of social networks, which in turn encourages a higher level of political participation and civic engagement. On the contrary, young people of lower SES are more likely to be in disadvantaged positions in political participation in terms of their limited access to and

skills in information technology and civic learning efficacy in education (Merien et al., 2010).

These approaches to social capital help with understanding the way in which social capital is generally working among Chinese university students. On the one hand, a clear relationship is not found between social capital and students' political behaviours of, for example, voting and getting in touch with officials in the quantitative data in this study. Although the interview further reveals more information about students' participation in Party-related activities, they are not of the nature of political participation in the real sense. However, if research focus is placed on the influence of social capital on broader civic participation, the first model of social capital offers a plausible explanation for the case of Chinese university students. On the other hand, the influence of students' social and economic status is revealed in this study. Surprisingly, students in interviews did not mention their lack of money or relevant financial resources as the main barrier to civic participation. Rather, they acknowledged a lack of necessary resources in terms of organizational supports and communication skills as main barriers. For example, the Party members in this study tend to receive more organizational support for their social activities.

Putnam laments the declining of social capital recently, as mass media would probably distract people from civic engagement (Putnam, 2000). This negative causal role in the social capital model has won support from many scholars, as they believe that the media has to some extent undercut the kind of public culture which is needed for a healthy democracy (Dahlgren, 2003, p.151). However, recent research has also provided different evidence for this social capital model. For instance, Livingstone and Markham's study (2008) concludes that engagement with mass media, especially the news, seems to sustain voting and interests in politics. Similarly, Romer and the colleagues' research (2009) reaffirms the favourable relationship between social capital and media use including television. Graber (2004) contends that the media plays a role in connecting public's everyday lives to civic participation, as it provides relevant information to the public

collectively to meet people's information needs and social needs. Theoretical debates over social capital tend to continue. However, the research findings in this study echo the research conducted by Romer et al. (2009), and provide evidence that the social capital model under mass media could also help to explain civic engagement, that is mass media, especially social networks, play a role in university students' civic involvements.

7.5 The application of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context: its implications for a new direction for citizenship education

The literature review in Chapter Two discussed new developments in citizenship understanding and citizenship education in the digital age. There has emerged a body of literature that claims a more powerful influence of the Internet, mostly in more mature democratic systems, which has a reverse agenda-setting effect on the traditional media (Lee et al., 2005; Sweetser et al., 2008; Wallsten, 2007). For example, Deuze (2006) pointed out that people can experience politics-related citizenship issues in their everyday active participation through new mass media. Sweetser et al. (2008) find that blogs were successful in influencing the news agenda on television news during the 2004 presidential election in America. In addition, Wallsten (2007) finds that there is bidirectional relationship between mainstream news media and social media such as blog discussion. In this connection, the public sphere is not necessarily confined to formal politics in classical Habermasian theories, while a "cultural public sphere" or an "aesthetic public sphere" has been theorized from a post-Habermasian perspective (McGuigan, 2005, p.427). The emerged notion of cultural citizenship comes to acknowledge the potential of citizenship construction in people's everyday lives and in their interaction with popular culture beyond the domain of formal political activities (Hermes, 2005).

The literature review in Chapter Three, however, indicates that debates about the Internet's civic influence over Chinese university students remain unsolved, and pessimistic views are prevailing among Chinese scholars. This study provides an interesting case of the Chinese context to understand the potential or the limitations of the digital media. I finally argue that my findings and the discussion about students' civic commitment and civic

participation in this research confirms the central argument for cultural citizenship in the Chinese context: participants have shown characteristics of active citizens under the influence of mass media, which is different from “good citizens” confined in ideological and political education. The supporting evidence is discussed below.

First, the central argument of cultural citizenship in Chapter Two argues that mass media and popular culture is considered as a potential and penetrating place for civic consideration and civic discussion in people’s daily lives. In this research, the discussion in sections 7.2 and 7.3 has strongly suggested the possible democratic role of mass media and popular culture among Chinese university students. It is especially meaningful in China as the access to formal participation is blocked. Therefore, it would be safe to argue that mass media, in particular, the Internet provides a valuable space for university students not only to reach out but also to express their deeper values that may be more heavily censored elsewhere in the political public sphere.

Second, the research findings indicate that participants’ civic experience online is accompanied by their entertainment-oriented experiences, which is another important characteristic of cultural citizenship. For some participants, although they are more interested in entertainment topics than serious news, it is also an occasion for students to show their passion for democratic discussion through everyday casual topics. These findings are consistent with the argument that interactions on the aesthetic level could help people to create a deeper association with each other as well as to uncover and declare their deep values (Baym, 2000; Ross, 2008). In this regard, sharing some collective entertainment experiences among university students could contribute to building a more enjoyable social environment which would invoke more open conversations and communication. Therefore, it could be argued that an “aesthetic public sphere” appears to exist in the Chinese context.

Third, the notion of cultural citizenship demonstrates the importance of channelling everyday politics through mass media into formal politics. Participants in this research

stated that their voices are more easily to be heard on the Internet, as their voices could be more quickly channelled to the official public sphere and public figures are often pushed to make some responses to online opinions. In this connection, the research shows that cultural citizenship in the Chinese context does not stay on the conceptual level but tends to arouse discussion in real life and exert real influence in formal politics. This result is consistent with the argument that designing provocative products online manages both to generate wide influence in society in general and also to get noticed by the government (Tang & Yang, 2011).

My research overall suggests that mass media has been deeply embedded in university students' daily lives, and provides a valuable space for ordinary university students to express their thoughts and values and organize civic activities. Participants seemed to be more interested in aesthetic issues or topics rather than serious political topics. Such civic consideration is particularly significant in the context of China, where its political public sphere does not provide a free environment for discussing core civic values.

With China's rapid move from elite education to mass higher education under the wave of globalization, it has become necessary for efforts to be made to develop new forms of education (Davies et al., 2005). Great pressure has been placed on promoting citizenship education reforms and new initiatives for encouraging students' civic learning and civic participation in wider society. By reviewing the representative literature on ideological and political education and mass media in China, this research shows that the traditional understanding of citizenship and political citizenship education is adopted by most scholars, and it seems insufficient in understanding students' everyday civic communication. On the contrary, the presentation of findings in this study points out that mass media is playing a powerful part in the process of students' political socialization by influencing how young people defined and experienced citizenship in a different way.

The notion of cultural citizenship tends to provide a new direction for citizenship education in China. Specifically, it indicates the potential civic implications of using mass media in

educational areas. Although there is the argument that current evidence does not suggest that new learning technologies would definitely lead to new forms of participation and learning, and more realistic approaches should be constructed (Selwyn & Gorard, 2003), western scholars generally consider the site of daily experience such as family, neighbours, the market place, the library and the mass media as the site of informal education, where every individual could acquire attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge from this truly lifelong process (Scheerens, 2011). There is a consensus in the academic community about the potential of social media platforms in citizenship education (Davies & Sant, 2014). The research findings of this study confirm that compared with the influence of explicit citizenship teaching, implicit citizenship learning through mass media in daily lives is far more influential for Chinese university students' civic competencies and further constitutes an important part of citizenship learning in Chinese universities. As this direction of citizenship education has been traditionally ignored in Chinese citizenship research, this research demonstrates that a connection needs to be established between students' implicit citizenship learning through mass media in their daily lives and university based citizenship education.

Although above analysis confirms the signs of cultural citizenship and indicates the importance of civic learning via mass media among Chinese university students, further analysis reveals that there is a disconnection between students' ideals of civic participation and their participation opportunities existing in practice, which is discussed in section 7.6. Therefore, I am led to believe that the implications of cultural citizenship for citizenship education in China cannot be fully realized overnight; rather it needs a gradual and fluid process which is constrained by the social, economic, political and cultural conditions in China. The collective efforts of all citizens are required in creating a favourable environment for a learning process, discussion and problem solving (Edward, 2004).

7.6 The disconnect between students' ideals of civic participation and participation opportunities existing in practice

A dichotomous category of "thin" and "thick" citizenship is used to understand the

multidimensional concept of citizenship in some scholarly discussion (Kennedy et al., 2008). A morally and ideologically grounded understanding of citizenship is often labelled as “thin” citizenship, whereas “thick” citizenship represents a more rounded set of expectations of citizens (Bubeck, 1995; Walzer, 1994). Thus the category of “thick” citizenship is consistent with the “maximalist” interpretation of citizenship which is suggested by T.H. McLaughlin (1992), suggesting citizenship education is characterized by interactive participation, that is value based and process led (Kerr, 1999). A research study by Tu (2011) demonstrated that Chinese university students were more inclined to develop a “thin” conception of citizenship than a “thick” one considering the disconnection between their civic perceptions and civic participation.

This research extends the discussion on Chinese university students’ perceptions of citizenship. However, this current study is reluctant to attach the label of “thin” citizenship to university students, as the findings support the idea that there is a new generation of young people in China who are eager for greater civic participation in constructing youth policies (Ngai et al., 2001). It also shows that young people engaged in civic activities perceive themselves as agents of socialization, seeking to establish just societies through active civic participation (Guessous & Watts, 2005). For instance, the quantitative data demonstrates that most participants showed a high level of civic commitment and civic knowledge, and they expressed their understanding of civic participation in interviews around “political participation,” “expression” and “making differences”. Therefore, the research results in this study enrich the positive interpretations of civic participation that the level of participation is high and can be improved further (Davies et al., 2006; Whiteley, 2004). In essence, this study reveals that university students are demonstrating a cultural understanding of citizenship which is no longer confined within ideologically grounded citizenship and rather entails “thick” citizenship with cosmopolitanism implications.

The findings, however, indicate that participants’ idealized civic participation under the framework of cultural citizenship is not entirely achieved when they perform civic activities online or offline. It is also evident that there is a low occurrence of political

participation such as signing petitions among the participants from the questionnaire data. Some of the interviewees said they prefer to observe other people's comments online rather than to speak out or to take further civic actions offline because some sensitive topics are monitored by the government. In addition, the qualitative data shows that students mainly reported their attendance in Party-related activities in the university based on their potential personal benefit, while their wider offline civic participation was limited. The reasons leading to this situation provided by the participants echoed Olsen's (1969) proposition that university students are on the one hand objectively prevented from formal political participation in the Chinese political system, and, on the other hand, are subjectively unwilling to participate.

A notable disconnect between university students' idealized civic participation and their realistic experience of civic participation in their daily lives is thus observed from this study. This unbalanced status in essence reflects the competing value systems in the Chinese pluralist society. On the one hand, the growing influence of economic development and cultural transformation under the wave of globalization in China poses significant challenges to the single civic identity shaped by the state (Law, 2007). University students are demanding more civic opportunities motivated by their implicit citizenship learning from mass media. This demand indeed conforms to the notion that students should develop as whole persons spiritually, morally, socially, culturally, mentally and physically, and efforts should be made to ensure that students have reasonable opportunities to develop themselves as complete persons (Ungoed-Thomas, 1997). On the other hand, university students' idealized expectation of civic participation is objectively influenced or confined by external forces such as the university educational policies and a wider macro system including social, political, economic and cultural contexts in China. Specifically, the literature review in Chapter Three indicates that the traditional values of Confucianism and socialism's values of patriotism and collectivism are rudimental values being promoted in policy guidelines and citizenship education. Thus there has existed a tendency to ignore individual rights and citizen participation in China (Odgen, 2003). Although the Chinese government has more recently been undergoing democratic reforms,

it has not been in a position to provide a favourable environment for developing students as political activists.

University students are aware of the changes in their relations with society. As shown in this study, most of the participants expressed their strong civic commitment and indicated their willingness to take part in social decisions. However, the long-standing tendency to emphasize conformity, collectivism and responsibility for rights within the national framework remains unchanged (Zhao, 2010), which finally turns into restricting students from developing full civic engagement as citizens. Therefore, this study fundamentally reflects that university students' thick end of citizenship perceptions is disconnected from thin citizenship in citizenship education policies, and students' cultural citizenship understanding is disconnected from traditional citizenship in a political framework in Chinese society. This echoes the literature in Chapter Two that cultural citizenship cannot be expected at the same level in different contexts, as this study shows that university students' civic participation is restrained by prevailing traditional values in Chinese educational areas and the macro social system.

7.7 The role of explicit civic learning in fostering active citizenship in China: ideological and political education

The literature of cultural citizenship has emphasized the importance of channelling informal politics into real changes in formal politics. However, the analysis above has indicated the barriers to the full enactment of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context. Therefore, more recognition should be given to identifying how to promote mass media's civic potential in the political public sphere. Sections 7.7 and 7.8 respectively conduct a further analysis in the area of citizenship education and the public sphere with the intention to provide some suggestions for how to make students' informal civic discussion more grounded in the Chinese political public sphere.

The literature review in Chapter Three shows that current ideological and political education in Chinese universities constitutes the main explicit citizenship learning context

for university students. The Party-state is playing a dominant role as a principal shaper of the citizenship education curriculum, and its focus has shifted from political education and moral education in the 1980s to citizenship education with civic implications in the 21st century (Law, 2007). This study demonstrates that this pedagogical system basically encourages students to think more about social and moral issues. The questionnaire findings show that more than 56% of the participants admitted that they have developed certain dispositions, values and moral positions such as equality, responsibility, cooperation and love. A high percentage of interviewees stated that they frequently participated in political study and activities organized by the Party branch on campus. Therefore, these findings are generally consistent with a previous study in 2000 that university students had a strong concern for the state and for national affairs (Guangming Ribao, 2000).

However, the full picture of the findings infers that this explicit citizenship curriculum based on ideology and political education could not fully meet students' genuine need for exercising active citizenship. This indicates that although the citizenship curriculum in universities now aims at shaping particular civic attitudes, students' involvements in civic actions are not automatically achieved (Dimitrov & Boyadjieva, 2009). It is evident from the questionnaire data that the current citizenship curriculum fails to provide civic participation experience. Although university students are encouraged to take part in Party-related activities, their idealistic needs and expectations of civic participation are not fully addressed. In addition, the interview data reveals participants' clear dissatisfaction with current ideological and political education on its teaching contents and teaching methods, and the most striking argument proposed is that more support from the university and teachers is needed to enable their wider civic participation. Cox et al. (2005) contend that if the content of teaching textbooks is not up-to-date or related, it will not trigger interests of students, never mind educate them with civic skills for participation. The students' two-pole attitudes in this study are consistent with Fairbrother's argument (2003) that students' attitudes towards citizenship education in China are demonstrating a wide spectrum of responses from acceptance to resistance.

The reality of the citizenship curriculum's inability to promote active participation mainly results from the traditional Chinese educational system. Under the CPC's leadership of Chinese universities, the traditional Chinese educational system has paid too much attention to students' political orientation and to their political education, while lacking the incentive to look in depth at students' inner hearts about their humanitarian inclinations and life values (Wang, 2014). Davies and his colleagues (1998) also point out that there is also a tendency to concentrate narrowly on the field of academic articulation in education in other global contexts. As to the notion of citizenship in modern China, it is characterized by emotional attachment to the national flag and national anthem, to China's long and remarkable history and recent modernization accomplishments, and more generally to patriotism and nationalism (Fairbrother, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Lee, 1998, 2005; Li, 2009). Thus citizenship education in China has a long tradition in neglecting academic research on theoretical issues and the curriculum design related to civic learning (Chen & Reld, 2002). On the contrary, teaching focus is concentrated on cultivating obedience, patriotism, socialism and nationalism at the expense of more dynamic forms of civic practices among university students. Myers (2010) argues that if citizenship education emphasizes a narrow dimension of citizenship, students may be less encouraged to engage in civic life. The reason is that the narrow structure of citizenship education is not able to represent the lived experience and identity of students.

The expansion of higher education aims to "produce more mobilized citizenry, changed cognitions, new forms of authority and new political discourses" (Kamens, 2009, p. 106). Citizenship education discussed in the western context in Chapter Two shows that the existence of competing definitions of citizenship and different modes of citizenship education has encouraged attempts to develop the potential of what can be an incoherent vision with varied practices in and beyond educational settings, which is able to provide platforms for active citizenship among students (Kerr, 2005). The essence of education related to civic engagement needs to focus on current contents, key citizenship concepts such as justice and equality, learning and participation opportunities within a framework under which a diverse society is promoted (Davies et al., 2012).

It thus clear to understand the fundamental reason why explicit citizenship teaching through ideological and political education is no longer satisfactory for encouraging active citizenship and liberal democracy in cosmopolitan sense among Chinese university students. It is that the current citizenship curriculum in China is solely based on party-related principles and theories confined within socialism and collectivism, but discards the development of cultural citizenship understanding in university students' everyday lives. What needs to be done by Chinese scholars in the future is to continue to explore the general implications of mass media, especially the new media, in citizenship education (Bennett, 2008). The underlying tone of these efforts should be to help "young people to play a full and active role in society" (Gary, 2015, cited from Davies et al., 2014).

7.8 The weak public sphere in Habermas' model

The study confirms the existence of the cultural public sphere in the Chinese context discussed in section 7.5. However, it cannot escape the fact that the public domain in the classic Habermasian sense is still lacking in China. The fundamental reason is that the participatory civic culture is not encouraged to any great extent in China.

Almond and Verba (1989) provide a basic framework for understanding a civic culture and propose three types of civic culture, namely parochial, subject and participant. This division is based on citizens' civic orientation representing different degrees of the interactive relation between citizens and a government. The parochial civic culture is congruent with a traditional political structure, where citizens are indifferent and ignorant of political phenomena and live remotely from the central government. In a society with a subject civic culture, citizens are aware of the central government and heavily subjected to its decisions with few possibilities for dissent, which is consistent with a centralized authoritarian structure. In a democratic political structure characterized by a participant culture, citizens are able to influence the government in various ways and they have an interactive relationship with the government. This framework of civic culture provides a criterion for understanding the situation of civic culture in the Chinese context.

The research findings of this study demonstrate that China is probably in the state of subject civic culture. Although mass media, in particular, the new media, may provide unprecedented space for students' civic discussion and civic engagement, the findings indicate that the influence of mass media is operated in limited ways and the Internet has not yet developed as a powerful tool for students to fundamentally challenge the state authority (Weber & Jia, 2007). This study shows that university students' political participation is not effectively supported, as some participants complained that ordinary citizens are always excluded from formal political arenas, and that their civic experience under mass media only presents very general involvements in social affairs. The absence of an active channel for formal civic participation made students' expectations of civic opportunities unrealistic. For instance, one university student in another recent study (Kim, 2008, p. 21) used the terms of "hollow elections" and "fake democracy" to describe elections.

Most participants admitted that internet censorship to some extent affected their freedom of communication and discussion online. Yang (2003) proposes that the existence of internet censorship tends to make people less engaged in online forums for fear of state punishments. Moreover, participants expressed their urgent requirements to receive support and advice from teachers or organizations for their offline civic participation. They admitted that some online discussion faded quickly due to a lack of support. In a similar vein, Bondes and Schucher³⁶ (2012) pointed out that the lack of organizational support would hinder the influence of mass media on normative social and political agenda, thus indicating that institutional organizations such as universities should place their efforts in promoting these civic activities. Therefore, the results infer that students may meet with some difficulties in proceeding with their online discussion. Similarly, a research study found that the discussion forum online in China is not mature enough for conducting serious political discussions based on Habermasian ideal standards such as rationality, freedom and civility (Zhou et al., 2008).

³⁶ Maria Bondes and Gunter Schucher investigated the discourse and transformation of Sina Weibo discussion on the train crash near Wenzhou in China in July 2011. Their Paper was presented at the 22nd IPSA World Congress. Retrieved from http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_14462.pdf. Accessed on 12 December, 2013.

The findings of this study add evidence to arguments that the political public sphere is not fully developed in China. Based on the Habermasian theory, the public sphere is independent from the state. It is unlikely that civic organizations in China could be completely free from government control and interference, and their support for university students' civic participation can be expected to continue to be limited. Zhang (2002) pointed out that China has a steady social structure with the characteristics of a strong government and a weak society. Therefore, I would argue that the condition of the public sphere under specific social, economic, political and cultural conditions in China is not expected to promote the same level of cultural citizenship as is found in the western context. The weak public sphere of Habermas' model identified in this study has to some extent restrained university students' political participation, online civic discussion and offline formal participation.

Scholars, however, argue that there is a need for a critical evaluation that does not ignore or underestimate mass media's potential civic contribution (See section 7.2) (Yang, 2009), as the study shows that students have come up with creative ways to respond to the harsh internet control. Although the online community is not completely virtual, it is practical in a certain sense, indicating that people can supervise state power and influence public policy making (Zhao, 2005). Therefore, instead of using the ideal concept of the "public sphere", the term "authoritarian deliberation" is used to reveal better the complicated nature of the public sphere in China (Jiang, 2010). This indicates that although casual chat online only forms a weak public which is subject to authoritarian control, it can still provide space for civic deliberation and further put a check on the state authority. Zheng (2007) echoes this argument in suggesting that the Internet might create more "political liberalization" in China in that although full-blown democracy cannot be realized immediately in China, mass media, in particular digital technology, at least allows university students to urge the state to be more accountable for social issues.

7.9 Summary

This chapter brings together general findings from both quantitative and qualitative data,

discusses these findings under the research framework of “cultural citizenship”, and makes attempts to provide answers to the central research question in this study.

Firstly, it analyses the civic role of mass media and popular culture among university students. The most potent supporting evidence for this argument is that new mass media has provided a much wider platform for students to follow and discuss civic issues. Students tend to develop a cosmopolitan view which embraces resources of modern culture, and looks beyond the Chinese mainstream culture. It then highlights the role of social capital in university students’ civic participation. In contrast with Putman’s “*Bowling Alone*” thesis, this study supports the idea that social capital could be accumulated through new mass media, and in return wider social participation among university students can be promoted. It finally confirms the application of cultural citizenship among Chinese university students and emphasizes the existence of the aesthetic public sphere in the Chinese context. In this regard, the notion of cultural citizenship has served as a new direction for citizenship education in China.

However, the analysis also reveals the disconnection between students’ ideals of civic participation and their civic opportunities in real life. The findings show students’ demands for genuine civic participation opportunities, yet university students are restrained in party-related activities, and their formal political participation and online civic discussion is limited. With the intention to provide insights in how to channel informal politics into formal politics, the study argues that efforts need to be made both in university citizenship education practices and in the public sphere in the Chinese context.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This research has examined the effects of using mass media to facilitate civic participation and civic learning, argued for the cultural citizenship perspective among Chinese university students and explored how factors impact on the application of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context. This chapter sets out to reframe principle aspects as conclusions with the intention to clarify the logic of my findings. Reflection is made to gauge whether research questions have been answered by the research outcomes. It goes on to discuss the possible implications of this research and highlights its significance for various parties among citizenship education, citizenship policies and citizenship academic research. After that, it reflects on the potential contribution that this study may make to citizenship research in China and identifies limitations as well as possible areas for further research opportunities.

8.2 Major findings: the enactment of, opportunities for, and barriers to cultural citizenship among university students in China

Having analysed the process and factors which influence students' civic experience in and beyond university citizenship education in Chapter Seven, it is indicated that the general socio-historic conditions in China, in particular, the development of civic culture, may account for the relatively exclusionary scenario among students' civic engagement (See Section 7.8). However, it is important to concentrate my research themes of this small-scale study on the domain of Chinese higher education. Therefore, the principal conclusions drawn from the research are further organized by the term of cultural citizenship and the central research question posed in Chapter One.

8.2.1 The enactment of cultural citizenship: the current state of students' civic experience with mass media

The questionnaire findings show that mass media, especially new mass media, has become

a significant aspect of civic expression, civic participation and civic learning for Chinese university students. For instance, the questionnaire data confirms the positive relationship between students' broader civic participation and their mass media use through the consumption of TV entertainment programs, social networks and movies (See section 5.7.1). In addition, students' particular online activities are found to be positively related to their offline civic participation, thus indicating the civic implications of the Internet for students' participation in their daily lives (See section 5.7.2).

The interview findings provide more evidence of students' civic awareness arising from their entertainment experiences through social networks and BBS forum, as they believe these types of mass media are more likely to provide a flexible platform for expression and discussion (See section 6.4.2). Through rounds of analysis of students' interviews, I mainly uncovered that students' representation of their civic experience under mass media was not confined to online communication and entertainment programs that they viewed for enjoyment, but it is extended to broader civic concerns of political values, social justice and cultural meditation (See section 7.2).

The analysis of the findings further reveals the potential civic role of popular culture among university students, as it has created an informal public sphere and provided a chance for students to debate more thoroughly over political notions by taking the forms of entertainment programs, online discussion and movies (See section 7.3). The findings also indicate the importance of social capital for civic participation, as the use of social networks is found to provide a platform for university students in this research to know new people and get connected (See section 7.4).

The evaluation of such efforts among university students is not trying to decide whether their perspectives are right or wrong, but to explore the possibility of whether students' mass media experience could make a contribution to social discussion, reflection and even actions. The analysis of both sets of findings demonstrates that students' current civic experience with mass media offers an account of their enactment of cultural citizenship and

indicates the possibility and the existence of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context. The democratic significance of the new mass media derives from the picture of university students talking about their collective opinions and social matters through their informal experience online. In this regard, the analysis proves that a western-born concept such as cultural citizenship could be applicable to the political and cultural contexts in China.

A more grounded understanding of how university students talk about their experience under mass media is gained through the framework of cultural citizenship, suggesting that more attention should be paid to understanding how students' aesthetic experience through mass media could be channelled into effective citizenship learning and real civic actions. University students could benefit from practical civic participation opportunities and also from opportunities to consider the implications of digital citizenship teaching (Bennett et al., 2009). The study also indicates the possible direction of citizenship education in the Chinese context through an informal learning program which covers lifestyle citizenship, mass media and the public sphere.

8.2.2 Opportunities for cultural citizenship: the university's potential for promoting participation and the existence of the informal public sphere

Having answered the first half of the central research question about the existence of cultural citizenship in section 8.2.1, I went on to exploring how the political, economic and cultural conditions in China contribute to the proposed two preconditions for the enactment of cultural citizenship.

The questionnaire data demonstrates the potential of universities for promoting students' understanding of civic knowledge and civic participation in a limited way both inside and outside of the citizenship curriculum. For instance, it shows that a majority of students acknowledged that ideological and political education has provided relevant social knowledge (See section 5.3.1), and the university tends to pay attention to and even enact those civic values. Meanwhile, students reported a good frequency of social participation encouraged by the university, which could be predicted from students' involvements in

communities and in society (See section 5.3.5). The interview data reveals the significant role played by the Party in successfully encouraging participation among significant amounts of students (See section 6.3.3). In addition, students stated that their participation in relevant activities is encouraged by the university atmosphere (See section 6.6.3). It is important to note from the interviews that some teachers have offered some suggestions of searching civic knowledge beyond the university curriculum.

The analysis also shows the existence of the informal public sphere in the Chinese context, as students' civic experience through new mass media indicates the promising area of the informal public sphere in China (See section 7.5). This research reveals that the new mass media tend to provide a newer and bigger platform for students' everyday civic exchanges of experiences and opinions. It might create more hope for a university student to use the Internet in channelling their voices to the formal public sphere. Therefore, the research suggests that instead of placing the evaluation of the Internet's civic implications into two poles of positive and negative, it is more practical to examine specific practices in students' use of the medium such as the efforts made in this research.

From the analysis above, I argue that students' civic experience in the university and in the new mass media has made a contribution to the development of active participation and to the development of the public sphere in the Chinese context, which correspondingly provides opportunities for the enactment of cultural citizenship among university students.

8.2.3 Barriers to the adoption of cultural citizenship

The analysis of the findings reveals the disconnection between students' ideals of civic participation and their counterpart in reality (See section 7.6). The students' ideal representation portrays civic participation as engaging in inclusive practices including pursuing positive values such as justice, equality and democracy, mutual efforts at making their voices heard and making relevant changes in the current unsatisfactory social situation (See section 6.2.2). However, participants found themselves to have had few participatory experiences which are consistent with these principles, and there are no signs

of changes in this direction. Although the tool of mass media is an ideal place for students' voice and civic participation, the lack of attention and support for their mass media use significantly reduces its efficacy (See section 6.4.3). The research also demonstrates that barriers to the effective use of mass media for participation undoubtedly exist. On the one hand, the findings suggest that the explicit curriculum of ideological and political education in China cannot meet university students' needs for active participation (See Section 7.6). On the other hand, the analysis indicates that the existence of the weak public sphere in the classic Habermasian model in the Chinese context appears to be a fundamental barrier to students' active formal participation (See section 7.7).

Five factors related to the inadequacy of ideological and political education are detected from the research: 1) participation is not a priority in its intended learning outcomes while moral education and political education is emphasized. The explicit representation of civic participation in this particular curriculum locates active political participation into a distant scenario from students' daily lives while it places the overwhelming emphasis on the cultivation of socialism, collectivism and patriotism (See Section 5.3.1). 2) The educational policies directed and regulated by the Government treat students as passive subjects in political participation, and there are no powerful agencies supporting students' comprehensive participation in their daily lives (See Section 5.3.6). 3) Teachers mainly concentrate on delivering contents of textbooks through mechanistic teaching methods which leave little time for pedagogical engagement and creative initiatives (See Section 5.3.2). 4) The way of examining teaching outcomes is mainly through open flexible essays without systematic assessment technologies and timely feedbacks (See Section 5.3.3). 5) The curriculum tends to face difficulties in attracting university students in their choices of civic learning (See Section 5.3.4).

Another example of barriers to university students' cultural citizenship lies in the absence of a public sphere which could promote citizenship competency. The quality of the public domain in the Chinese context has exerted a profound influence on how young people actually engage in real civic actions under mass media. Open political discourses are

highly censored to be consistent with mainstream culture, and the media are heavily regulated to fulfil propaganda duties for the CPC through internet censorship (See section 3.2). More importantly, it showed students' limited chances of getting access to political participation offline (See section 6.4.3). It turns out that students use the Internet mainly for voicing their views instead of taking real civic actions through mass media (See section 6.4.3). However, active participation is more than merely acquiring information (Livingston et al., 2005).

The analysis fundamentally leads to the idea that students' lack of civic participation opportunities is less a result of individual attributes than an outcome of the current university curriculum framework and the regulatory policies to which universities have to respond (See section 7.6). In this regard, I argue that the conventional citizenship curriculum system and national policies in the Chinese context to some extent discourage students' authentic participation, especially political participation. Although mass media has shown its ability to promote civic participation among university students, its efforts are counteracted by insufficient support from teachers, universities and policy makers.

8. 3 Revisiting the research questions

This section re-visits the research questions defined in Chapter One and briefly summarizes the outcomes of the central research question (RQ) and auxiliary research questions (ARQ) with the intention to examine whether the stated research questions have been answered.

RQ1-Does students' civic experience with mass media indicate the potential for cultural citizenship among Chinese university students?

Section 7.5 indicates that mass media provides a platform for students to communicate and discuss and lowers the barriers to civic participation. In addition, students' aesthetic experience through mass media is not confined to their seeking enjoyment but leads to their deliberation on political and social issues. University students can clearly utilize mass media to express their civic concerns and facilitate their civic actions. Therefore, the study

provides an affirmative answer that university students' civic experience with mass media indicates the cultural citizenship perspective in the Chinese context.

ARQ 1.1 - within university students' attitudes towards university citizenship curricula, how do they view their civic experience that is prompted by the curriculum in their universities?

The quantitative findings suggest that university students hold a neutral attitude towards the citizenship curriculum, and a majority of students agree that they have learnt civic knowledge from ideological and political education. However, the interview data shows students' explicitly expressed dissatisfaction towards the teaching methods, contents and organizing principles of this curriculum. Participants' understanding of the university citizenship curriculum suggests that it is not viewed as a useful source for promoting active participation. Rather it is seen to be more about the instilling into university students of ideologies of socialism, collectivism and conformity.

ARQ 1.2 - within university students' attitudes towards mass media's implications for citizenship, how do university students view their civic experience that is prompted by the mass media?

The findings suggest that university students hold positive attitudes towards mass media's civic implications, and their understanding of media citizenship is congruent with the literature on cultural citizenship discussed in Chapter Two. They regard mass media as resources that are more transformative in nature for their civic expression and civic participation. In particular, the findings show that, through mass media, aesthetic experiences are of civic impact among university students. The participants believe that new mass media could provide efficient and timely information, a platform to express their civic concerns which are sometimes restricted within formal occasions, a way to get in touch with government officials and a place where their voices can be heard.

ARQ 1.3 - What's the general picture of students' mass media use? How do university students commence activity online? How do they commence relevant civic activities

offline?

The findings present the picture that the participants spend the most time on social networks and the Internet, and certain amounts of time on entertainment TV programs and movies, while they spend a little time on reading newspapers and watching serious news. It also shows that their most frequent online activities are respectively playing games, watching movies or enjoying music, following the news, chatting with friends, getting involved in social discussion, which are grouped as broader civic participation. It is interesting to note that participants in this study reported a high level of visiting civic websites and voting online. However, they do report little experience of signing petitions online, which is grouped as formal political participation. Correspondingly, the participants reported more experience of broader civic participation offline such as donating money, discussion and attending voluntary organizations. However, their experience of political participation offline such as elections is scarce.

ARQ 1.4 - Can the mass media meet the expectation of engaging young people in the public sphere and of creating new forms of political and civic culture among young people? What are the different effects of various types of mass media on students' political participation or wider civic participation offline?

The questionnaire findings clearly show that participants' consumption of social networks, entertainment programs and movies is positively related to their broader civic participation. The interview data provides the explanations that participants are more likely to be influenced by those aesthetic experiences through mass media and take relevant civic actions such as attending voluntary activities and civic discussion with friends. In this regard, the findings indicate that mass media enhances students' broad civic participation in increasing students' ability to get connected and discuss different opinions, and promotes the development of the informal public sphere. However, it does not directly lead to an ideal public sphere, as students' political participation and real broad civic participation offline are still limited.

The questionnaire data also shows that participants' consumption of newspapers and

serious news is significantly positively related with their formal political participation. However, few participants reported their habits of reading newspapers and watching serious news, and the frequency of taking part in political participation is low. Therefore, it shows that mass media's civic role for creating a public sphere in the Habermasian classic model is limited for young people.

ARQ 1.5 - What motivates students to become involved in civic participation in the university and through the mass media?

This question is answered based on two different contexts. The findings show that in the short term students are mainly engaging in civic activities organized by the university for personal benefits with the intention of adding some credits for their future employment. However, participants who believe they are able to affect some changes and show concerns towards society are more likely to look for other platforms such as mass media for civic participation. The interview findings show that some participants regard digital media as a new medium to enable connections, express civic concerns and assert their rights. Therefore, the research shows multiple motivations in participants' engagement in civic activities.

ARQ 1.6 - What obstacles do university students mention when they are talking about their civic experience through mass media? How do they cope with this situation?

One common barrier is internet censorship in China. Some sensitive comments and topics would be removed by the regulators, and students' discussion online is highly censored. However, students are likely to come up with creative ways to avoid internet censorship.

Rather, the most crucial problem is that they found they receive little help and support from teachers when facing complex information online. In addition, students found it difficult to transfer online performance into real offline civic practices, as little support is provided to develop their civic engagement and their access to formal participation is blocked. The result is that students often linger online without particular civic attitudes and actions but just watch what is happening online, or they conduct some civic discussion

online without taking further public actions.

RQ 2 - To what extent are relationships between mass media use and civic participation among university students in this study mediated or moderated by individual characteristics and social contexts such as citizenship tradition, civic education experience and the national context?

As indicated in Chapters Two and Three, the enactment of cultural citizenship in this research is largely restricted by the poor quality of active participation and the limited development of the public sphere in the Chinese context. On the one hand, section 7.7 shows that the civic education curriculum in Chinese universities is not a favourable place for meeting students' demands for their ideals of civic participation. On the other hand, section 7.8 indicates the lack of a public sphere in China. Internet censorship, limited access to formal political participation and limited support for promoting civic participation offline restricts the enactment of cultural citizenship among young people.

As to the moderation influence of individual characteristics, the research shows that female students are more likely to attend civic participation through social networks. Moreover, participants majoring in arts and in their third year engage with more civic activities online than other students. The Party's role in promoting civic engagement is not revealed in this study, as its role is limited to the domain of Party-related activities. Rather it is seen that participants who are Party members and CYLC members are more likely to get connected through social networks.

8.4 Recommendations: possibilities for constructing an ideal state for cultural citizenship

Possible recommendations drawn from the research findings for citizenship education and citizenship research in China are presented in this section. The following discussion aims to point out possible changes which could be carried out in levels of education practices, citizenship policies and citizenship research with the intention to enhance the enactment of

cultural citizenship among university students.

8.4.1 Education practitioners in universities

The findings have indicated that the university needs to undertake some changes if it wants to be a more positive place for providing conditions for students to be involved in civic participation. It is important for university leadership to consider other potential domains for civic participation and open more political participation opportunities for all students. The fostering of an inclusive ethos in schools is advocated by Keating et al. (2009). For example, attending certain civic activities should not be confined to Party members and all university students should be allowed and be encouraged to attend. Another possible way is to organize voluntary civic activities based on students' suggestions and voices, thus students would have a stronger motivation to participate. Osler and Starkey (1999, p.201) argue that the best way of learning is through experience rather than through academic study alone because "knowledge of rights will not in itself achieve rights". Thus, an important step in this regard is to establish a comprehensive framework that works for university students to undertake civic activities, rather than directly constraining them within ideological and political education.

It has been found that limited systematic support for wider civic participation itself, as well as media-enabled participation, apparently exists among university students. The university leadership must develop their own understanding of, and commitment to, providing students with more opportunities for civic participation and focus on developing clearer policies and better guidance. Students need to be encouraged to provide feedback about their experience of participation. This research also highlights that participants viewed teachers' guidance and classmates' discussion as important sources of civic learning. Some scholars agree that "getting training, awards and working with friends would encourage more volunteering" and they also highlight the role of peer support (Cremin et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important for teachers to be well prepared to provide more innovative and critical citizenship understanding and offer students chances to discuss citizenship issues in classes.

The research has confirmed the civic implications of mass media among university students. In particular, students' entertainment experience through mass media is found to be influential in their civic understanding and certain civic activities. Davies and Sant (2014) suggest that the use of social media may enhance citizenship education in the aspects of constructing identity, promoting citizenship knowledge and facilitating participation. Therefore, it is necessary for the leadership as well as teachers to consider new mass media as a way of promoting civic learning. The most important element in this perspective is to pay attention to students' voices and their requirement for active learning. Newmann (1990) contends that students' active learning will lead to their involvements in civic engagements in a broader sense. In this regard, if there exists an effective channel connecting students' self-civic learning through mass media and formal citizenship teaching in classrooms, students' civic competence will be greatly increased. Thus it is necessary to explore the connection between the citizenship curriculum in universities and young people's daily lives beyond the university-based domain in wider society (Thompson et al., 2015).

The research reveals the role of social capital in students' civic participation. Specifically, friend circles and mutual communities are crucial in students' motivation for civic involvement. Whiteley (2005) suggests that social networks may be one of the important factors in the process of participation. In this regard, if universities placed less emphasis on Party-related activities but organized discussion groups and activities according to students' interests and majors, a more favourable environment would be provided for students to get connected in local, regional and national affairs.

As the educational systems and policies in universities are underpinned by the government, I argue that the overall demand for universities is to strive for working towards a balance in the relationship between the maintenance of the existing educational system and the requirements of university students' active citizenship participation.

8.4.2 Policy makers

I further argue that if the above changes could effectively take place in universities, particular support should be demanded from policy makers of this Party-state country, as the Party plays a significant role in setting the bottom line for citizenship education in China. On the micro level, significant reforms in ideological and political education need to be enforced. For instance, updated information of civic affairs needs to be incorporated into textbooks and the importance of exercising authentic civic participation needs to be emphasized in textbooks and citizenship teaching.

A better understanding of the benefits of mass media is required among policy makers. The design of an ideal public sphere must incorporate digital channels. Coleman and Blumler (2009) argue that it calls for imaginative policy making when making use of the Internet's potentiality for democracy. To achieve this, policy makers need to provide more flexible room for expression and discussion online, and a strategic and comprehensive approach to mass media use is required.

Barriers to access to political participation are revealed from the research. In this regard, a significant challenge is to provide support for students' civic participation from different levels of local agencies with real power. They need to protect students' rights and possibilities of participation as well as open more access to students' political participation.

8.4.3 Researchers in the citizenship field

If citizenship education is supposed to develop a sense of civic intention and to prompt active participation among students, the research has shown significant implications of new mass media in the realization of these aims. In addition, the research confirms the application of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context. Therefore, it could be understood that the cultural strand of citizenship education might be more attractive to university students. However, it remains worth noting that there is a gap between the current citizenship research in China and the cosmopolitan understanding of citizenship. As a

result, the complexity of the lived citizenship experience of university students is often misrepresented (France, 2008; Hine, 2009). Therefore, I argue that perhaps future researchers should explore critically the impact of mass media on the development of civic understanding and civic participation beyond the framework of ideological and political education. In addition, Chinese citizenship research needs to be constructed through a more cosmopolitanism and student centred perspective. Attention should be given to students' practical skills of expression, communication, cooperation and civic values promotion in their immediate and wider communities (Thompson et al., 2015).

8.5 Contributions to knowledge, limitations and the need for further research

Having presented my major findings in this research and the potential recommendations for students' enactment of cultural citizenship, I summarize the possible contribution to the current knowledge made by this research and reflect on existing limitations as well as possible areas for further research.

8.5.1 Contributions

Whereas previous work related to the field of cultural citizenship either concentrates on media discourse research or stops at the exploration of citizens' media use, this research is significant because it strives to develop a useful theoretical framework for exploring the notion of cultural citizenship from the current literature and linking the discussion of cultural citizenship with its two preconditions: the quality of participation and the development of the public sphere. It also attempts to introduce this concept of cultural citizenship into the educational domain. Therefore, the research contributes to existing theories by providing a more meaningful theoretical approach with the intention of exploring how university students enact cultural citizenship, to what extent they are encouraged or discouraged and how they comprehend their situation.

This research is significant because it does not rush to reject the applicability of the cultural citizenship perspective originated in the western context to a different system; rather it makes attempts to find ways of relating this concept to the Chinese context. This

research especially applies a constructed theoretical approach to Chinese university students' experience of citizenship education and brings new possibilities for understanding their civic experiences in the daily contexts within universities and beyond such as through the use of mass media. On the one hand, this thesis offers a theoretical approach to understanding and evaluating students' civic experiences under mass media. On the other hand, this thesis also provides a meaningful theoretical approach to understanding whether and how ideological and political education in Chinese universities works for students' civic participation (See Chapter Four).

Whereas previous work related to the field of citizenship is mostly conducted in developed countries, the empirical findings of this research contribute to knowledge in the field of cultural citizenship and active participation by confirming the enactment of cultural citizenship among university students and the development of the informal public sphere in China (See Chapter Seven). This makes it a unique approach in that this thesis provides evidence of the application of cultural citizenship in a developing context, and further enriches the literature of cultural citizenship both in China and more globally.

While previous works related to citizenship education in China barely explored mass media's civic role, this thesis confirms a need to explore students' civic experiences in their daily lives, especially under mass media. This produces benefits in two important ways: it adds an individual perspective and opens a fertile terrain for citizenship research in China which currently underestimates mass media's implications for civic learning, and it provides a platform for policy-makers to understand the need for shifting from formal citizenship teaching into combined formal and informal citizenship pedagogical approaches in China.

The research reveals the disconnection between students' ideals of civic participation and their civic participation opportunities in real lives, and university students' political participation is characterized by being incomplete and exclusive. This disconnection is inevitable as the research identifies both the deficiency of ideological and political

education for active participation and the lack of an ideal public sphere as twin barriers to the effective enactment of cultural citizenship. It is anticipated that such adverse factors as are revealed from the study will provide some new insights to the continuing debate about young people's civic learning through ideological and political education in China.

The findings are presented at both a theoretical and a practical level and can make a contribution to academic research as well as to policy makers in the field by providing a theoretical framework, examples of actual performance and alerting them to the obstacles relating to the concept of cultural citizenship in the Chinese context. It offers a significant contribution to the emerging field of cultural citizenship research in China by providing a valuable perspective on the informal public sphere and the role of mass media that should be considered along with academic contributions.

As well as the discussed theoretical and empirical contributions from this research, I further argue that this work opens methodological possibilities for further studies. While the field of citizenship education research has been conducted by theoretically grounded works based on substantial discussion (e.g. Callan, 1997; Crick, 2000; Levinson, 2012), large scale or small scale quantitative studies (e.g. Torney-Purta et al., 2001), qualitative accounts (e.g. Osler & Starkey, 2005), and detailed ethnographic investigations (Levinson, 2001; Weller, 2007), this thesis has shown that there are particular benefits to constructing bridges across some of these methodological approaches. Instead of looking at them as fundamentally separated, I have presented some of the benefits of combining, for instance, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques.

Finally, within the fields of citizenship education and cultural citizenship, some research emphasizes the role of ideological and political education and the university in fostering active young citizens; other works are centred on an understanding of how young people actually participate through mass media. My research calls attention to the need for a more balanced approach and a comprehensive program in China, which is to explore the application of cultural citizenship under the university framework in the Chinese context.

Considering the fact that formal citizenship education based on ideological and political education will always be a lasting and valuable site of civic learning for university students in China, this thesis has provided a direction and a model for combining cultural citizenship performance with considerations of the content of university citizenship curricula.

8.5.2 Limitations and the need for further research

While this project has provided theoretical and empirical contributions to research areas in citizenship and citizenship education, there are certain limitations in its research that could be addressed through future efforts. First, the theoretical framework of cultural citizenship described in Chapter Four is developed based on the literature originated in the western context, and it does not particularly account for the political and cultural variations which may exist in different regions and areas, in particular in developing countries such as China. Further research would be useful to identify any other cultural factors that could encourage young people in China to be active in civic participation and relate this to how they view different types of mass media. In addition, if a systematic comparative study could be conducted between China and the western context, it could provide for readers a more comprehensive and cosmopolitan understanding of the significance of cultural citizenship. The experience of conducting the research for this thesis has helped me to understand the context of the study in great depth and made me enthusiastic to continue researching in this direction and to personally take forward the ideas indicated above for further development in my future research plans.

Second, the notions of citizenship, citizenship education and civic participation are complex and evolving across time and contexts (Satoshi, 2004), and a multitude of historical, social and cultural factors are related to these conceptions. This small-sized research only attempts to provide Chinese university students' direct and general understanding of these notions. However, similar research about how mass media affects students' civic participation based on the framework of cultural citizenship should also be conducted in other contexts. For instance, studies in other Asian countries that share an

explicit citizenship curriculum and Confucian values would be of particular interest.

Third, the research findings suggest that the full enactment of cultural citizenship requires the university and the particular society to provide an ideal environment for active participation. The findings also show that university students are using their own ways to deal with the citizenship curriculum and to overcome internet censorship. However, this leads to a further question of where the basis of students' struggle actually lies? Different perceptions between university leaders and teachers and students may exist (See Davies et al., 2014). Thus one logical area for further investigation is that the concept of cultural citizenship needs to be explored from the perspectives of teachers, policy makers and citizenship researchers who are involved in this research area.

Fourth, some scholars warn that collecting quantitative data may provide only superficial and sometimes distorted evidence of participation (Davies et al., 2009). Due to practical constraints of gathering qualitative data for this study, more research emphasis is placed on the quantitative data, but recognizing the strength of qualitative studies I attempted to balance the analysis to get much value of both approaches as possible. This is the reason for my selection of a mixed methods research strategy so that students' voices could be influential along with the quantitative data. There would be significant value in conducting further more narrative-based and ethnographic studies among university students that would allow their individual voices to be expressed in a more critical and logical way. For example, Weller (2007) employs a wide arrange of research methods such as interviews, diaries, internet-based discussion and photography, and then presents a comprehensive picture of teenagers' experiences of civic learning and engagement.

Finally, this study indicates the civic potential of mass media among Chinese university students mainly based on the framework which aims to investigate the relationship among mass media use, civic participation and civic expression. Considering students' interaction with mass media is a fluid social process, a more flexible and compressive framework including qualitative enquires should be constructed for further research. For example,

Bennett et al. (2008) construct a framework to assess and code whether online sites are able to meet standards for active civic learning. Thus it would benefit my study if I could use more ways to access young people's mass media use.

8.6 Summary

This research thesis has discussed the concept of cultural citizenship and particularly the ways in which it can lead to civic practices in connection with mass media among citizens. Although the literature theoretically showed only a slim possibility of identifying influence of cultural citizenship in China based on the situation of current citizenship education in Chinese universities and in the public sphere (See Chapter Three), this empirical research has confirmed that the application of this western-born term of cultural citizenship among university students can be found in China. Overall, it sets out to argue that almost all participants acknowledged the civic role of mass media, especially new mass media, as it has provided them with a platform for expression, discussion and participation. Consistent with the cultural citizenship perspective, this research emphasizes the important role played by individual life experience for university students' civic perspectives and civic participation.

This mixed methods research also discovers that opportunities and barriers exist for university students' enactment of cultural citizenship. On the one hand, when the university has the potential of promoting a high level of civic intention among university students, it does not provide sufficient authentic and effective participation opportunities, which appears to be disconnected with students' expectations of civic participation. On the other hand, while the mass media is capable of constructing an informal public sphere for expression and communication among students, it does not directly lead to an ideal public sphere, as its civic potential is not well supported and the channel to formal political participation in many cases is blocked. Thus, the research shows that a comprehensive framework for civic participation opportunities in universities and an effective channel for real changes are the crucial areas for further developing university students' civic engagement in China.

Due to the unique political and cultural situation in this Party-state country, promoting a fundamental reform which moves completely away from political education and moral education to one that values active citizens under the framework of cultural citizenship may meet constraints. Even in a more democratic context in Australia, although the need for changes in civic learning styles has been recognized, the practical reforms met with considerable resistance from educational institutions (Bennett et al., 2008). However, as the research has justified the rationality of cultural citizenship among university students, it has indicated the possible direction for citizenship education reforms in Chinese universities. Citizenship research should no longer be confined within the Party-related domain, but needs to pay attention to citizenship opportunities in everyday life from the perspectives of university students. Therefore, I finally argue that this study raises the possibility of combining the benefits of informal citizenship learning and university-based citizenship education in China. It comes up with a framework for citizenship education that covers knowledge of citizenship, mass media and the public sphere in daily life with the intention to provide a way for students to express, communicate and negotiate about civic values and civic actions. Particularly, it is important to go beyond the conventional research of mainstream media and ideological and political education, and to explore directly university students' informal learning through their daily lives as a determining force in negotiating a new direction of citizenship learning. This is arguably the main contribution that the term of cultural citizenship can make to citizenship education in China. It is anticipated that future research will carry forward this direction and explore more about the enactments of, opportunities for and barriers to cultural citizenship and citizenship participation in students' daily lives.

Appendix 1

Student Questionnaire



Dear all,

My project title is **Cultural citizenship: an exploration of influence of school education and mass media on students' perception of citizenship in China**

I am seeking participants to take part in a survey that explores the influence of school education and mass media on students' perceptions of citizenship in China. In this research, citizenship issues are mainly related with civic systems, civic participation and civic principles. You will be asked to give answers about above aspects under the influence of mass media, especially TV and new mass media, such as internet and social networks (micro blogging). The questionnaire includes 27 questions, and it takes approximately 20 minutes to finish. At a later date, I will contact some of the respondents to conduct interviews. **If you have any question, please feel free to contact us by e-mail(s): c. zhang.2@research.gla.ac.uk.**

This front page will be removed in order to maintain anonymity. Only the researcher will have access to this information and it will be kept securely and separately from the rest part of this questionnaire.

Thank you!

Please leave your email address here so that you can be contacted for further discussion.

.....

For administrative use

Questionnaire No.....

Questionnaire No.....

Part I Demographics

1. Gender (Please tick)
Male ☐ female ☐
2. Which province do you come from?

3. Educational level (Please tick)
First year ☐ second year ☐ third year ☐ fourth year ☐
4. Educational background (Please tick)
Arts ☐ business ☐ science ☐
5. Political status (Please tick)
Member of Chinese Communist Party ☐
Member of the Communist Youth League of China ☐
People ☐
Confidential ☐
6. Please indicate your interest in following social news? (1=not interested at all. 5=very interest)
1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Part II Citizenship in curriculum and universities

7. As to different learning sources of citizenship education in universities, upon which of the following is the university education based? (Please tick any that are relevant)
 - a. official textbooks of compulsory political courses about CPC's theories including Marxism, Maoism, theories of Deng Xiaoping and Three Representatives ☐
 - b. courses like philosophy, history and politics ☐
 - c. Teachers' knowledge influences students' understanding of citizenship ☐
 - d. Supplementary learning materials like video and internet information ☐
 - e. others
8. If you want to explore more about relevant citizenship issues, to which of the following you will probably refer? (Please rank the first three)
 - a. Teaching textbooks in school
 - b. Discussing with friends and teachers
 - c. Serious news on TV
 - d. Newspaper
 - e. Discussing with the family
 - f. Searching information on the Internet

9. When you are being assessed in citizenship education, which type(s) of the following methods are used? (please tick any that are relevant)

- a. Closed exams ☐
- b. Open questions ☐
- c. thesis ☐
- d. Projects ☐
- e. Peer assessments ☐

10. Different types of teaching methods are employed to cultivate students' citizenship consciousness. How frequently do the following methods are used during your time at university?

	never	Not often	sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
Encouraging students to express different ideas					
Organizing discussion groups					
Preparing and reading through teaching PPT					
Connecting teaching content with the wider world					
Encouraging students to take responsibility for projects and disagreements					
Summarizing important points of textbooks for memorizing					
Using media(video or websites)					

11. As to the following citizenship activities in the university environment, to what extent have you been encouraged to do?

	never	Not often	sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
Vote in student union election					
vote in national-level election					
Get in touch some governmental officials					
Take part in public events designed to raise awareness of equality and justice					
Join a community or voluntary organization					
Donate money to poor people					
Group discussion and communication					

12. This is a list of intended learning outcomes of the Chinese citizenship education curriculum.

To what extent do you think you have achieved each of following aspects?

	none	Not a lot	A little	Quite a lot	A great deal
To foster patriotism, socialist moralities and values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To concern about the gap between the rich and the poor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To participate in national political life and social affairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To connect what is learnt in courses with experiences in wider society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To have confidence in myself and life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To behave responsibly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To respect others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To cooperate with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Critical thinking: to question the content in mass media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. As to evaluation of university curriculum, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
My knowledge of citizenship mainly comes from school education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received enough support in schools to put citizenship into practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School education has been able to provide useful answers to my questions about citizenship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School education is sufficient enough to help me understand citizenship issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School education is flexible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. The following are statements about the expected learning contents in citizenship curriculum.
To what extent do you agree or disagree?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
I would like to learn more about political knowledge like Chinese political system and election system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to learn more about Chinese traditional culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to have practice opportunities in class and at campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to learn how to get involved in social activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to know more about social issues like inequality and poverty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to gain more understanding of social mass media in classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like school citizenship education to be more linked with daily life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part III Mass media use

15. How much time will you normally spend on mass media in a day? (Please tick)

Less than 1 hour ☐

1-3 hours ☐

3—5 hours ☐

more than 5 hours ☐

16. What's the frequency for you to use following types of mass media?

	Less than 1 hour	1-3hours	3-5 hours	More than 5 hours
Watching CCTV news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching entertainment programs on Television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching movies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Surfing internet websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using social networks (face book, blog, micro blogging, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading newspaper (People's daily)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. How often will you do the following activities online?

	never	Not often	sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
a. Online shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Playing games, Watching movies or enjoying the music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Chatting with friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Following the news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. getting involved in social discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. forwarding social topics in personal blog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. visiting civic websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. organizing or joining in a social campaign	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. vote online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. sign a petition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part IV Mass media and citizenship

18. Which of the following, in your opinion, are the most important things that make someone a good citizen? (Please tick any that are relevant)

- Obey the law ☐
- Votes in election ☐
- Respect others ☐
- Active participation in social affairs ☐
- Have the power to influence others ☐
- I am not sure ☐

19. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
I trust my teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust my families and friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most voluntary organizations are just looking out for own interests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The political leaders and governments are more interested in serving the public.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have little confidence in some governmental organizations and staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. How often have you done the following activities in real-life

	never	Not often	sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
vote in national-level election	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get in touch with some governmental officials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Take part in public events designed to raise awareness of equality and justice					
Join a community or voluntary organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Donate money to poor people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussion and communication about social affairs					

21. Considering mass media, to what extent do you agree with the following regarding its entertainment value?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
It makes easy to understand citizenship issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is interesting and easily accepted by students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is direct and close with daily life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Considering mass media, to what extent do you agree with the following regarding its abundance of information?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
It is useful for me to understand citizenship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It provides different examples	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It makes the public well informed about social policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. The following are overall attitudes about mass media's influence on students' understanding of citizenship. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
My knowledge of citizenship mainly comes from mass media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received enough support from mass media to put citizenship into practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mass media has been able to provide useful answers to my questions about citizenship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mass media is sufficient enough to help me understand citizenship issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mass media is flexible					

24. Do you agree with the following states?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
I would like to know more about citizenship issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would voluntarily get involved in citizenship learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to take part in civic activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. The following are statements about CCTV news. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
The information is reliable and useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It can provide critical views	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is interesting and creative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content is closely connected with daily life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is entertaining	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is planned and full of commercial information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It can motivate school education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to understand citizenship issues through this program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be more easily influenced by this program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. The following are views about a popular TV program called "Dad, where are we going"? To what extent do you agree or disagree?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
The information is reliable and useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It can provide critical views	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is interesting and creative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content is closely connected with daily life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is entertaining	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is planned and full of commercial information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It can motivate school education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to understand citizenship issues through this program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be more easily influenced by this program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. The following are the views about the popular social network in China: micro blogging. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
I use this tool to get connected with my friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to forward some topics related with social issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to get involved in activities organized by net citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It has provided a direct way for our voices to be heard, if we use it properly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussion topics have made me understand some social issues better and more directly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 2

Table of Indicators of Questionnaire

Table 4.1: Presentation of the questionnaire and associated indicators

Section	Question No.	Domain Measured	Questions types
Demographics	1	Gender	Closed categorical questions (Multiple and mutually exclusive)
	2	Place of residence	Open-ended
	3	Educational level	Closed categorical questions (Multiple and mutually exclusive)
	4	Educational background	Closed categorical questions (Multiple and mutually exclusive)
	5	Political status	Closed categorical questions (Multiple and mutually exclusive)
	6	Political interest	Closed categorical questions (Multiple and mutually exclusive)
Citizenship in curriculum and universities	7	University citizenship teaching materials	Multiple choices questions
	8	Personal citizenship learning choices	Sorting sequence questions
	9	Assessment methods	Multiple choices questions
	10	Frequency of University citizenship teaching methods	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	11	University civic participation opportunities	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	12	Received citizenship learning outcomes (civic knowledge)	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	13	Overall attitudes towards university citizenship curriculum	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	14	Expected citizenship learning contents	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
Mass media use	15	Time spent on mass media	Closed categorical questions (Multiple and mutually exclusive)
	16	Frequency of using particular type of mass media	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	17	Frequency of online activities	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)

Mass media and citizenship	18	The standards of "good" citizen	Multiple choices questions
	19	Social trust	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	20	Offline civic participation	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
Mass media and citizenship	21	Civic qualities learned from mass media	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	22	Attitudes towards mass media's entertainment characteristics	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	23	Attitudes towards mass media's information abundance	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	24	Overall attitudes towards mass media	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	25	Civic commitments	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	26	Attitudes towards CCTV news	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	27	Attitudes towards entertainment TV programs	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)
	28	Attitudes towards social networks	Closed categorical questions(Five-point Likert scale)

Appendix 3

The Ethical Application Form submitted to University of Glasgow

Application No. (Office use only)



University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

COLLEGE ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR NON CLINICAL RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

EAP - APPLICATION FORM FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

This application form should be typed, and submitted electronically. **All questions must be answered.** "Not applicable" is a satisfactory answer where appropriate.

(Instructions: In Word format, click on shaded area within box to enter text, boxes will expand as required).

Applications should be submitted **at least one month in advance** of the intended start date for the data collection to allow time for review and any amendments that may be required.

1 APPLICANT DETAILS

1.1 Project Title Cultural citizenship: an exploration of influence of school education and mass media on students' perception of citizenship in China ----an empirical study of students in Beijing Normal University	
1.2 Name of Applicant Chong Zhang	1.3 Student I.D. or Staff Number 2046200
1.4 School/Subject/Cluster/RKT Group School of Education/ PhD of Educational Studies/Social Justice, Place and Lifelong Education	

1.5 This Project is:

Staff Research Project <input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate Research <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Programme Convenors Only Project within a PGT or UG Programme <input type="checkbox"/>
Postgraduate Taught <input type="checkbox"/>	Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/>	

1.6 Programme Title: *Student applicants only*

PhD of Educational Studies

1.7 Ethical Risks: *Application will not be considered if this section is blank*

Supervisors should complete section **1.7A**

Staff applicants should complete section **1.7B**

1.7A COMMENTS FROM SUPERVISOR: (Student Applications)

Comment on the research ethics risks involved in the project The research ethics risks for this project are minimal. The design of the questionnaires and interviews does not pose any risk to respondents and the researcher has taken great care to ensure that ethical practices are built in to the instruments and to the ways in which the data will be gathered and subsequently handled.

I have checked this application and approve it for submission for review to the Ethics Committee.

Supervisor's Name Dr Catherine Fagan	Date 12/11/13
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Risk Assessment: UG and PGT applications only. Does this application qualify for a low risk review or fall within the applicable programme parameters? Please refer to **Low Risk Research Guidance on College ethics webpages** for clarification.

YES ☐ NO ☐

1.7B RISK ASSESSMENT FROM STAFF APPLICANT:

Comment on the research ethics risks involved in the project

1.8 Researcher(s) (and Supervisor(s) where appropriate)

Title and Surname	First Name	Phone	Email (This should normally be a University of Glasgow email address)
Miss Zhang	Chong	07598497134	c.zhang.2@research.gla.ac.uk

Principal Supervisor(s) (where applicable)

Title and Surname	First Name	Phone	Email (This should normally be a University of Glasgow email address)
Dr Fagan	Catherine	01413303011	Catherine.Fagan@glasgow.ac.uk
Dr Britton	Alan	01413303498	Alan.Britton@glasgow.ac.uk

1.9 External funding details

Note. If this project is externally funded, please provide the name of the sponsor or funding body.

Sponsor/Funding Body: NOT APPLICABLE

2 Project Details

2.1A Start date for your data collection and end date of data collection involving human subjects.

From: (dd/m/yyyy) 20/01/2014	To: (dd/m/yyyy) 20/12/2014
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2.1B Proposed end date for your research project. This should be when you expect to have completed the project and published the results - (e.g expected date of award of PhD, book publication date)

To: (dd/m/yyyy) 07/09/2016

2.2 Justification for the Research

Why is this research significant to the wider community? *Outline the reasons which lead you to be satisfied that the possible benefits to be gained from the project justify any risks or discomfort involved.*

The reasons can be explained from three perspectives. First, this research will provide empirical data about students' perceptions of citizenship under the influence of school education and mass media in China, which is of great use for improving citizenship education in China. Second, this research will give Chinese scholars a new direction for thinking about citizenship issues, which is cultural citizenship. It is important for students to understand citizenship in their daily lives. Third, it will help western countries to know more about citizenship education in China, and motivate a meaningful dialogue about citizenship issues within different countries and cultures

Document and policy analysis as well as the empirical research of students' perspectives on citizenship consciousness under the context of formal education and mass media, will make it possible to know the real ideas and situation of students. Furthermore, the research aims to provide a critical thinking about current educational policies under mass media. Therefore, participation in this research will give participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of citizenship education and mass media, and contribute to citizenship researches in China.

2.3 Research Methodology and Data Collection

2.3A Method of data collection (Tick as many as apply)

Face to face or telephone interview (attach a copy of the interview themes. This does not need to be an exact list of questions but does need to provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to form a clear view of the project and its ethical implications.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Audio or video-recording interviewees or events (with consent)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Questionnaire (attach a copy)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online questionnaire (provide the address) http://	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participant observation (attach an observation proforma)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus group (attach proposed questions and recording format)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please provide details – maximum 50 words)	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.3B Research Methods

Please explain the reason for the particular chosen method, the estimated time commitment required of participants and how the data will be analysed (Use no more than 250 words).

CSSEAP Jan 2013

1. Questionnaire. This research method will be used to discover students' general situation of their understanding of citizenship under the influence of school education and mass media. Conducting a questionnaire can get answers from students directly, and it is the most appropriate method to gather a diverse scope of views. What's more, the data collected through questionnaires would be easily accessible and analysed. The estimated time to finish this questionnaire will be no more than 20 minutes. The data collected from the questionnaire will be analysed using the software of SPSS. For example, standard parametric tests will be used in order to compare mean total and subscale factors. A questionnaire of English version is attached but a Chinese language version will be distributed, and the collected data will be analysed in English.

2. Audio-recording interview. The reason why I will also use interviews is that it can help me to get comprehensive understanding and additional information from respondents. The interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes. The data collected from interviews will be audio recorded in order to make sure all information can be kept. It will firstly be interpreted of its main theme, which is related with research questions, then it will be coded and categorized. The interview will be conducted in Chinese, and the transcripts will be translated into English.

2.4 Confidentiality & Data Handling

2.4A Will the research involve: *Tick all that apply*

Participants consent to being named?	<input type="checkbox"/>
De-identified samples or data (i.e. a reversible process whereby identifiers are replaced by a code, to which the researcher retains the key, in a secure location)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject being referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Anonymised samples or data (i.e. an irreversible process whereby identifiers are removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers. It is then impossible to identify the individual to whom the sample of information relates)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete anonymity of participants (i.e. researchers will not meet, or know the identity of participants, as participants are part of a random sample and are required to return responses with no form of personal identification)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other methods of protecting the privacy of participants? (e.g. use of direct quotes with specific, written permission only; use of real name with specific, written permission only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
If 'any other method of protecting the privacy of participants', please provide more details:	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.4B Which of the following methods of assuring confidentiality of data will be implemented? *Tick all that apply*

Note: The more ethically sensitive the data, the more secure will the conditions of storage be expected to be.

Access to computer files to be available by password only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Storage at University of Glasgow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stored at another site (please provide details, including address)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data to be kept in locked filing cabinets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data and identifiers to be kept in separate, locked filing cabinets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any other method of securing confidentiality of data in storage (please provide details)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

As the data will be collected in Beijing Normal University, the data has to be kept temporarily in China. Questionnaires will be locked in a separate cabinet. All the recorded audio will be transferred to a personal laptop immediately after interviews and deleted from the recorder. The laptop is protected with the personal password. The consent forms from interviewees will be stored in a locked cabinet. As soon as I return to Glasgow, the questionnaires and paper consent forms collected from participants from Beijing Normal University will be stored in the locked cabinet in my PGR office. The files in the personal laptop will be transferred to the personal work computer in the University of Glasgow and deleted from the laptop.

2.5 Access to Data

2.5A Access by named researcher(s) and, where applicable, supervisor(s) and examiner(s) ☒

2.5B Access by people other than named researcher(s)/Supervisor(s)/examiner(s) ☐

Please explain by whom and for what purpose:

2.5C Retention and Disposal of Personal Data

The 5th Principle of the Data Protection Act (1998) states that personal data must not be kept for longer than is necessary based on the purpose for which it has been collected. Please explain and as appropriate justify your proposals for retention and/or disposal of any personal data to be collected.

*Where appropriate (and it normally will be appropriate) explain **when** and **how** the data you have collected will be destroyed.*

The electronic data will be kept in the personal computer by private password. The paper data will be kept separately in a locked cabinet. I will delete the collected electronic data on receiving my degree of PhD and completing related publications in 2020. The paper data will be destroyed by a paper shredder in 2020.

2.6 Dissemination of Results.

2.6A Results will be made available to **participants** as: *(Tick all that apply)*

Note: Intended means ought normally to take account of the age, capacities and situation of participants.

Written summary of results to all <input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of final manuscript (e.g. thesis, article, etc) presented if requested <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Verbal presentation to all (information session, debriefing etc) <input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation to representative participants (e.g. CEO, school principal) <input type="checkbox"/>
Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/>	Other or None of the Above <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Please explain</i>

2.6B Results will be made available to **peers and/or colleagues** as: *(Tick all that apply)*

Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/>	Journal articles <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Thesis (e.g. PhD), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Book <input type="checkbox"/>
Submission <input type="checkbox"/>	Conference Papers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Other or None of the Above <i>Please explain</i>	
---	--

2.7 Participants

2.7A Target Participant Group (Please indicate the targeted participant group by ticking all boxes that apply)

Students or Staff of the University <input type="checkbox"/>	Adults (over 18 years old and competent to give consent) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children/legal minors (under 18 years old) <input type="checkbox"/>	Adults (over 18 years who may not be competent to give consent) <input type="checkbox"/>
Young people aged 16-17 years <input type="checkbox"/>	

2.7B Will the research *specifically* target participants with mental health difficulties or a disability?

YES ☐ NO ☒

If YES, please explain the necessity of involving these individuals as research participants

2.7C Number of Participants (if relevant give details of different age groups/activities involved)

The sample will be undergraduate students studying in Beijing Normal University in China. They will be chosen from different colleges and gender balanced. The number of participants is expected to be about 200, and no more than 300.

2.7D Explain in detail how you intend to recruit participants.

If payment or any other incentive (such as a gift or free services) will be made to any participants please specify the source and the amount of payment to be made and/or the source, nature and where applicable the approximate monetary value of the gift or free service to be used. *Please explain the justification for offering payment or other incentive.*

At the first stage, I will distribute copies of the questionnaire in Beijing Normal University in China. The location will be different colleges in Beijing Normal University. Participants will be recruited on a voluntary basis and no payment or gifts will be provided.

At the second stage, I will conduct interviews. I will choose about 10-15 students from different colleges based on the nature of their responses to the questionnaire. Students will be contacted by their email left on the code page of the questionnaire, and they will be invited to attend an interview on a voluntary basis.

2.7E Dependent Relationship

Are any of the participants in a dependent relationship with any of the investigators, particularly those involved in recruiting for or conducting the project? (For example, a school pupil is in a dependent relationship with their teacher. Other examples of a dependent relationship include student/lecturer; patient/doctor; employee/employer)

YES ☐ NO ☒

If YES, explain the relationship and the steps to be taken by the investigators to ensure that the subject's participation is purely voluntary and not influenced by the relationship in any way.

2.7F Location of Research

University of Glasgow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside Location <i>Provide details of outside locations, including as much information as possible.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The research location will be in Beijing Normal University in Beijing, China.	

2.8 Permission to Access Participants

2.8A Will subjects be identified from information held by another party?

(eg. a Local Authority, or a Head Teacher, or a doctor or hospital, or Glasgow University class lists)

YES ☒ NO ☐

If YES please describe the arrangements you intend to make to gain access to this information including, where appropriate, any other ethics committee that will be applied to.

A former degree supervisor in China has been approached and has agreed to provide access to his current students and has given permission to request their participation in the data gathering.

2.8B Permissions/Access

Permission is usually required to gain access to research participants within an organisation (e.g. school, Local Authority, Voluntary Organisation, Overseas institution)

Is evidence of this permission provided with this application?

YES ☒ NO ☐

OR to follow?

YES ☐ NO ☐

2.8C Does this application involve the survey of University of Glasgow students?

YES ☐ NO ☒

If YES, separate permission to survey students needs to be obtained prior to any such survey being undertaken. Normally this permission should be sought from the appropriate authority **after** ethical approval has been granted. (*See application form notes for detail*).

2.8D Is this application being submitted to another ethics committee, or has it been previously submitted to another ethics committee?

YES ☐ NO ☒

(If YES, please provide name and location of the ethics committee and the result of the application.)

2.9 INFORMED CONSENT

If you require information on the age of legal capacity please refer to the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/50/contents>

2.9A Have you attached your Plain Language Statement(s) (PLS) (also known as Information Sheet) for participants?

A Plain Language Statement is written information in plain language that you will provide to subjects to explain the project and invite their participation. Contact details for Supervisor and College Ethics Officer MUST be included. Please note that a copy of this information must be given to the participant to keep.

YES ☒ NO ☐

If NO please explain

2.9B How will informed consent by individual participants or guardians be evidenced?

Note: In normal circumstances it will be expected that written evidence of informed consent will be obtained and retained, and that a formal consent form will be used. A copy of which should be provided. *If written evidence of informed consent is not to be obtained a **substantial** justification of why not should be provided.*

Signed consent form <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recorded verbal consent <input type="checkbox"/>
Implied by return of survey <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Provide details

Justification if written evidence of informed consent is not to be obtained and retained:

A signed consent form will be requested from interviewees. Return of the questionnaire will be taken as indications of consent.

3 Monitoring

Describe how the project will be monitored to ensure that the research is being carried out as approved (e.g. give details of regular meetings/email contact).

I will have regular meetings and discussion with my supervisors. I have also made myself familiar with the University of Glasgow ethics and research policies.

4 Health and Safety

Does the project have any health & safety implications?

YES ☐ NO ☒

If YES, please outline the arrangements which are in place to minimise these risks

5 UK and Scottish Government Legislation

Have you made yourself familiar with the requirements of the **Data Protection Act (1998)** and the **Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**?

(See Application Guidance Notes for further information. In addition visit <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/dpfoioffice/> for guidance and advice on the Act).

Please ensure you have read the [eight basic Principles underlying the Data Protection Act 1998 \[DPA\]](#) that protect the rights and freedoms of individuals with respect to the processing of their personal data.

The **Freedom of Information Act 2002** ["FOI"] provides a general right of access to most of the recorded information that is held by the University. The Act sets out a number of exemptions/exceptions to this right of access.

YES ☒ NO ☐

If NO please explain

6 Declarations by Researcher(s) and Supervisor(s)

This section MUST be completed to confirm acceptance of Code of Conduct. If there is no scanned signature then please type the names into the boxes below.

- The information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.
- I have read the University's current human ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with the guidelines, the University's Code of Conduct for Research and any other condition laid down by the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee and the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

(Full details of the University's ethics guidelines are available at: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/research/aimsassessmentandpolicies/ourpolicies/ethicshomepage/>)

- I and my co-researcher(s) or supporting staff have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached application and to deal effectively with any emergencies and contingencies related to the research that may arise.
- I understand that **no** research work involving human participants or data collection can commence until ethical approval has been given by either the School Ethics Forum (UG & PGT students only) or the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee (for PGR students and Staff).

	Signature	Date
Researcher (All applicants)	Chong Zhang	14/11/2013

Principal Supervisor (Where applicable)	Catherine Fagan	12/11/13
--	-----------------	----------

Applications should be submitted electronically as follows:

❖ **Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Student (UG & PGT)** applications:

Should be sent to their **School Ethics Forum** via their local administrative contact.
Please see contact details on College ethics website.
<http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/ethics/>

For **student** applications, there are two options for submitting Supervisor approval:

- 1) The student e-mails the application to their supervisor, who checks it and submits it to their local SEF contact (UG and PGT only)
- Or
- 2) The student e-mails the application to the SEF contact and the supervisor sends a separate e-mail to the appropriate administrative point of contact giving the details of the application and confirming approval for the submission.

❖ **Postgraduate Research Student (PGR) and Staff** applications submission:

Please upload the completed form, along with any other required documents by logging in to the Research Ethics System at - <https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/login/> this will then be considered by the College Research Ethics Committee.

Appendix 4

Ethics Approval Letter from University of Glasgow



University of Glasgow | College of
Social Sciences

CSS May 2013

Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Staff Research Ethics Application Outcome ☐

Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application Outcome ☒

Application Details

Application Number: 400130051

Application Type New ☒ Resubmission ☐

Applicant's Name Chong Zhang

Project Title Cultural citizenship: an exploration of influence of school education and mass media on students' perception of citizenship in China

Date application reviewed (d.m.yr) 10 Dec 2013

Application Outcome **Approved**

Start Date of Approval (d.m.yr) 20 Dec 2013

(blank if not approved)

End Date of Approval (d.m.yr) 07 Sep 2016

If the applicant has been given approval this means they can proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Recommendations (where application is Not Approved)

Please note the comments below and provide further information where requested. All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded. You must include a covering letter in a separate document (uploaded as the Resubmission Document online) to explain the changes you have made to the application.

Major

Minor

Comments (other than specific recommendations)

No recommendations. Both reviewers were completely happy with this submission.

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Terri Hume, Ethics Administrator.

End of Notification.

Page 1 of 1

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences
Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street, Glasgow G12 8QF
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

Tel: 0141-330-3007
E-mail: Terri.Hume@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 5

PLS for questionnaires (English version)



Plain Language Statement for Questionnaires

1. Study title and Researcher Details

Cultural citizenship: an exploration of influence of school education and mass media on students' perception of citizenship in China

-----an empirical study of students in Beijing Normal University

The researcher is Chong Zhang, who is doing PhD studies at the School of Education, University of Glasgow. This research is supervised by Dr Catherine Fagan and Dr Alan Britton.

2. Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

This research study is with the following aims:

- (1): To investigate the influence of school education on students' perception of citizenship;
- (2): To identify the influence of mass media, especially new mass media on students' understanding of citizenship;
- (3): To explore whether students have different experiences of citizenship under university education and mass media;
- (4): To discern the extent to which exposure to various media contributed to students' citizenship consciousness;
- (5): To identify students' potential needs in universities to understand citizenship under mass media.

The researcher will ask you to complete a questionnaire, which requires your answer about your perception of citizenship education in universities, your experience of mass media, as well as your understanding of citizenship under mass media.

4. Why have I been chosen?

This research aims to explore the influence of school education and mass media on undergraduate students' perception of citizenship. Beijing Normal University is the education centre in China, where students can get more opportunities to have discussion and to think about citizenship issues. You have been selected to take part in this study because we believe that your experience will help this study to identify issues that needed to be discussed in this research.

5. Do I have to take part?

You can take part in this research freely and willingly. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you feel uncomfortable with this questionnaire, you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, and you are not required to give a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

The questionnaire contains 27 questions, and will last no longer than 20 minutes. The researcher will ask you to complete questions about your perception of citizenship education and mass media in China. At a later date, some of the respondents will be contacted to conduct interviews by their email addresses left on the front page of this questionnaire. This front page will be first coded, and removed in order to maintain anonymity. Only the researcher will have access to this information and it will be kept securely and separately from the rest part of this questionnaire. The data collected from this questionnaire will be analysed by SPSS and the result will be used for research purposes. The raw data obtained will only be available to myself and my supervisors, and will be securely stored in a locked cabinet. Any paper of questionnaires and data will be destroyed at the end of 2016.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

We will ensure that the information you give is kept confidential. The participants' comments will be made anonymous. You will be identified by a pseudonym and any information about you will have your name and other information removed so that you cannot be recognized.

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

This research study will be a part of my PhD thesis in the University of Glasgow. The research report will be available in the University of Glasgow. The results may also be published in an academic journal paper or presented at conferences. I will seek permission by email prior to the use of any direct quotes, which will also be anonymous.

9. Who is organising and funding the research? (If relevant)

The University of Glasgow and I organize this research. My PhD study is supported by funding from CSC (China Scholarship Council).

10. Who has reviewed the study?

Before I start this research, my supervisors and the College of Social Science Ethics committee in the University of Glasgow have already reviewed this study.

11. Contact for Further Information

If you have any concerns regarding this research study, please feel free to contact me by email: c.zhang.2@research.gla.ac.uk. What's more, if you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project, you can also contact the supervisor Dr Catherine Fagan by email: Catherin.Fagan@glasgow.ac.uk. You can also contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Dr Valentina Bold by email: Valentina.Bold@glasgow.ac.uk.

Thank you!

Appendix 6

PLS of interviews (English version)



Plain Language Statement for Interviews

1. Study title and Researcher Details

Cultural citizenship: an exploration of influence of school education and mass media on students' perception of citizenship in China

-----an empirical study of students in Beijing Normal University

The researcher is Chong Zhang, who is doing PhD studies at the School of Education, University of Glasgow. This research is supervised by Dr Catherine Fagan and Dr Alan Britton.

2. Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

This research study is with the following aims:

- (1): To investigate the influence of school education on students' perception of citizenship;
- (2): To identify the influence of mass media, especially new mass media on students' understanding of citizenship;
- (3): To explore whether students have different experiences of citizenship under university education and mass media;
- (4): To discern the extent to which exposure to various media contributed to students' citizenship consciousness;
- (5): To identify students' potential needs in universities to understand citizenship under mass media.

The researcher will ask you to discuss your experience of citizenship education in your university, especially what you think about the implication of mass media for your understanding of citizenship.

4. Why have I been chosen?

This research aims to explore the influence of school education and mass media on undergraduate students' perception of citizenship. Beijing Normal University is the education centre in China, where students can get more opportunities to have discussion and to think about citizenship issues. You have been selected to take part in this study because we believe that your experience will help this study to identify issues that needed to be discussed in this research.

5. Do I have to take part?

You can take part in this research freely and willingly. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you feel uncomfortable with this interview, you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, and you are not required to give a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

The interview will last about 15-20 minutes. The researcher will ask you to discuss your perception of citizenship education and mass media in China. The interview will be audio recorded. The recorded transcript will be analysed to obtain main themes. The raw data obtained will only be available to the researcher and supervisors, and will be securely stored in a locked cabinet. The audio will be stored in a computer and secured by a password. Any audio recording and written notes will be destroyed at the end of 2016.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

We will ensure that the information you give is kept confidential. The participants' comments will be made anonymous. You will be identified by a pseudonym and any information about you will have your name and other information removed so that you cannot be recognized.

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

This research study will be a part of my PhD thesis in the University of Glasgow. The research report will be available in the University of Glasgow. The results may also be published in an academic journal paper or presented at conferences. I will seek permission by email prior to the use of any direct quotes, which will also be anonymous.

9. Who is organising and funding the research? (If relevant)

The University of Glasgow and I organize this research. My PhD study is supported by funding from CSC (China Scholarship Council).

10. Who has reviewed the study?

Before I start this research, my supervisors and the College of Social Science Ethics committee in the University of Glasgow have already reviewed this study.

11. Contact for Further Information

If you have any concerns regarding this research study, please feel free to contact me by email: c.zhang.2@research.gla.ac.uk. What's more, if you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project, you can also contact the supervisor Dr Catherine Fagan by email: Catherin.Fagan@glasgow.ac.uk. You can also contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Dr Valentina Bold by email: Valentina.Bold@glasgow.ac.uk.

Thank you!

Appendix 7

Consent form for interviews

College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee



Consent Form

Interviews

Title of Project: Cultural citizenship: an exploration of influence of school education and mass media on students' perception of citizenship in China
-----an empirical study of students in Beijing Normal University

Name of Researcher: Chong Zhang (PhD Researcher, School of Education, University of Glasgow)

Supervisors: Dr Catherine Fagan and Dr Alan Britton

If you agree to participate in this study then please read the following statements and sign your name below to indicate your consent.

- I have read the plain language statement for participants. I understand the procedures and I have been informed of what to happen.
- I agree to participate in this study on cultural citizenship.
- I understand that my interview and my response will be recorded using an audio device and I consent to this.
- I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I therefore understand that I can withdraw from this study at any point and I will not be required to provide any reason.
- I understand that my participation in this study is for research purposes, and it is not an evaluation of me as an individual.
- I understand that my interview data will be kept confidential, and it will be accessed only by the main researcher.
- I understand that, although the main researcher will be able to identify participants from the interview data, my name will not be used in reference to the interview in any papers or reports that arise from this research.
- I understand that I can contact the researcher for this project, Chong Zhang, or the principal supervisor Dr Catherine Fagan, to receive more information and/ or a copy of final manuscript, using the details below:

Chong Zhang
PhD Student
Room 574
School of Education
St. Andrews Building
University of Glasgow
Glasgow G3 6NH
Email: c. zhang.2@research.gla.ac.uk

Dr Catherine Fagan
Room 653
School of Education
St. Andrews Building
University of Glasgow
Glasgow G3 6NH
Tel: +44(0)141 330 3011
Email: Catherine.Fagan@glasgow.ac.uk

Name..... Signature..... Date.....

Appendix 8

The bivariate correlation between demographic and participants' media use habits

	Gender	Educational level	Educational background	Political status	Media time	Political interest	CCTV news	Entertainment TV programs	Movies	The internet	Social networks	Newspaper reading	Civic participation	Political participation
Gender		-.001	.012	-.175*	.092	-.002	.053	.082*	.123	.040	.021*	.038	.108	.074
Educational level			.067	.072	-.011	.149*	-.030	.132	-.057	.119	.163*	-.042	.128	.005
Educational background				.017	.046	-.011	.075	.060	.024	.001	.018	.028	-.047	-.031
Political status					.021	-.032	.041	.066	-.067	-.044	.086	.083	.019	.045
Media time						.064	.083	-.077	.040	.114	.063	.013	1.031	.082
Political interest							-.025	.089	.023	.103	.602	-.082	.296**	.293**
CCTV news								.630**	-.002	-.091	-.134	.412**	.074	.035
Entertainment TV programs									.010	-.017	.068	.291**	.226**	.205**
movies										.255**	.155*	.228**	.235**	.303**
The internet											.570**	.102	.144*	.086
Social networks												-.124	.147*	.151*
Newspaper reading													.172*	.174*
Civic participation														.613*
Political participation														

Note: **P<.01; *P<.05

Appendix 9

The operation procedure of exploring whether educational level moderates the relationship between mass media and civic participation

- 1) In order to explore whether educational level moderates the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation, a split group analysis among different educational levels was carried to test the moderator, and the results are shown below:

Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational level=First year)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
entertainment TV programs	10.390	1.412		7.358	.000
	1.108	.573	.374	1.934	.065

Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational level=Second year)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
entertainment TV programs	11.709	1.061		11.032	.000
	.765	.414	.242	1.847	.070

Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational level=Third year)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
entertainment TV programs	9.668	1.210		7.991	.000
	1.840	.455	.421	4.045	.000

Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational level=Fourth year)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
entertainment TV programs	10.916	1.485		7.349	.000
	1.287	.539	.320	2.389	.021

The results indicate that for participants of the first year and the second year, the relationship is not supported, as P is at >0.05 level, indicating that the moderator variable weakens the strength of the causal relationship. On the contrary, for participants of the third year and the fourth year, the relation is supported at $P<0.05$ level, indicating the moderator variable does not change the strength of the relationship at all. In particular, for third year students, the relation is supported at $p<0.01$ level. Therefore, educational level moderates on the relationship between the independent variable of “entertainment TV programs” and the dependent variable of civic activities for students of earlier year, but has no effect on participants of higher grade, which means that participants of the third year and the fourth year are more likely to take part in civic participation through watching entertainment TV programs.

- 2) In order to explore whether educational level moderates the relation between social networks and broader civic participation, a split group analysis among different educational levels was also carried to test the moderator, and the results are shown below:

Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational level=First year)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
social networks	12.401	1.726		7.183	.000
	.203	.597	.071	.339	.737

Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation
(Selecting only cases for educational level=Second year)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(social networks	9.972	1.341		7.439	.000
	1.169	.423	.349	2.765	.008

Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation
(Selecting only cases for educational level=Third year)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
social networks	10.007	1.117		8.959	.000
	1.388	.339	.425	4.093	.000

Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation
(Selecting only cases for educational level=Fourth year)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
social networks	9.428	1.669		5.650	.000
	1.484	.491	.393	3.023	.004

The results indicate that for participants of the first year, the relation is not supported, as P is at $>.1$ level, indicating that the moderator variable weaken the strength of the causal relationship. On the contrary, for participants of other educational levels the relation is supported at $P<.01$ level, indicating the moderator variable does not change the strength of the relationship at all. Therefore, educational level moderates on the relationship between the independent variable of “social networks” and the dependent variable of civic activities for students of first year, but has no effect on participants of other higher grades, which means that freshman are less likely to take part in civic participation through using social networks.

Appendix 10

The operation procedure of exploring whether political status moderates the relationship between mass media and civic participation

- 1) In order to explore whether political status moderates the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation, a split group analysis among different political status is also carried to test the moderator, and the results are shown below:

Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational level=Members of CYLC)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
entertainment TV programs	9.407	1.217		7.732	.000
	1.749	.485	.378	3.604	.001

Coefficient of the relationship between entertainment TV programs and broader civic participation (Selecting only cases for educational level=Members of Party)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(entertainment TV programs	12.261	1.060		11.562	.000
	.764	.386	.242	1.979	.052

The results indicate that for members of CYLC, the relation is supported at $P < .01$ level, indicating that the moderator variable does not change the strength of the relationship at all. On the contrary, for members of the Party, the relation is not supported, as $p > .05$ level, indicating the moderator variable weakens the strength of the causal relationship. Therefore, political status moderates on the relationship between the independent variable of “entertainment TV programs” and the dependent variable of civic activities for members of the Party, but has no effect on members of CYLC, which means that CYCL members are more likely to take part in civic participation through watching entertainment TV programs.

- 2) In order to explore whether political status moderates the relationship between social networks

and broader civic participation, a split group analysis among different political status was also carried to test the moderator, and the results are shown below:

Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation
(Selecting only cases for educational level=Members of CPC)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
social networks	9.231	1.175		7.859	.000
	1.423	.365	.404	3.895	.000

Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation
(Selecting only cases for educational level=Members of CYLC)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
social networks	9.388	1.043		8.998	.000
	1.628	.335	.523	4.865	.000

Coefficient of the relationship between social networks and broader civic participation
(Selecting only cases for educational level=Common students/people)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
social networks	11.694	1.500		7.796	.000
	.726	.442	.206	1.642	.106

The results indicate that for members of CPC and CYLC, the relation is supported at $P < .01$ level, indicating that the moderator variable does not change the strength of the relationship at all. On the contrary, for common students, the relation is not supported, as $p > .05$ level, indicating the moderator variable weakens the strength of the causal relationship. Therefore, political status moderates on the relationship between the independent variable of “social networks” and the dependent variable of civic activities for common students, but has no effect on members of CPC and CYLC.

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